

Sanskrit Studies

New Perspectives

Satya Vrat Shastri

**SANSKRIT STUDIES
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Satya Vrat Shastri

**HONORARY PROFESSOR, SPECIAL CENTRE FOR SANSKRIT STUDIES
JAWAHARLAL NEHRU UNIVERSITY**

**FORMERLY PROFESSOR AND HEAD, DEPARTMENT OF SANSKRIT
UNIVERSITY OF DELHI**

EX-VICE-CHANCELLOR

SHRI JAGANNATH SANSKRIT UNIVERSITY, PURI (ORISSA)



YASH PUBLICATIONS

Published by :

YASH PUBLICATIONS

X/909, Chand Mohalla,
Gandhi Nagar, Delhi-110 031

Email : yash_publication@hotmail.com

© Author

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Edition : 2007

ISBN : 81-89537-25-3

Price : Rs. 495.00

Printed by :

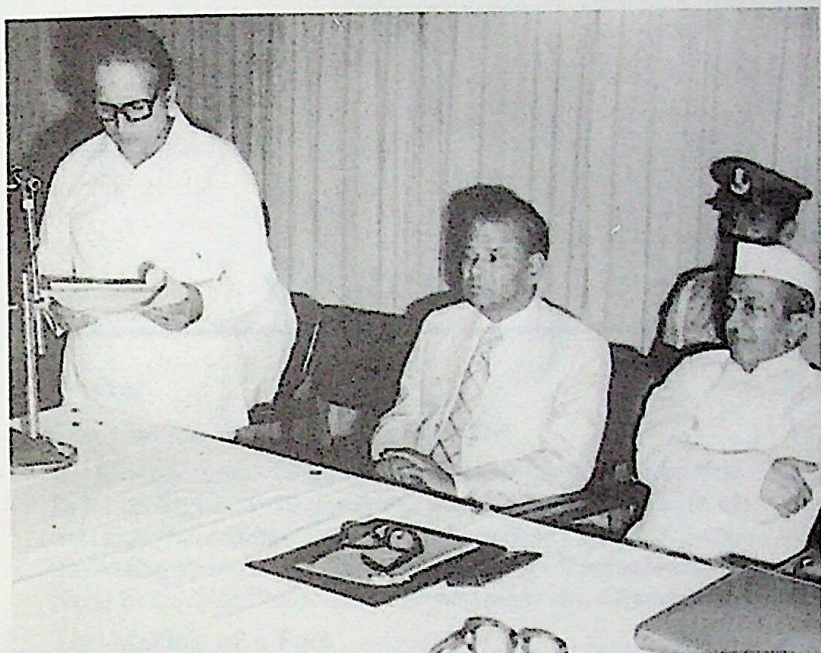
Vikas Computer & Printers
Naveen Shahdara, Delhi-110032

Preface

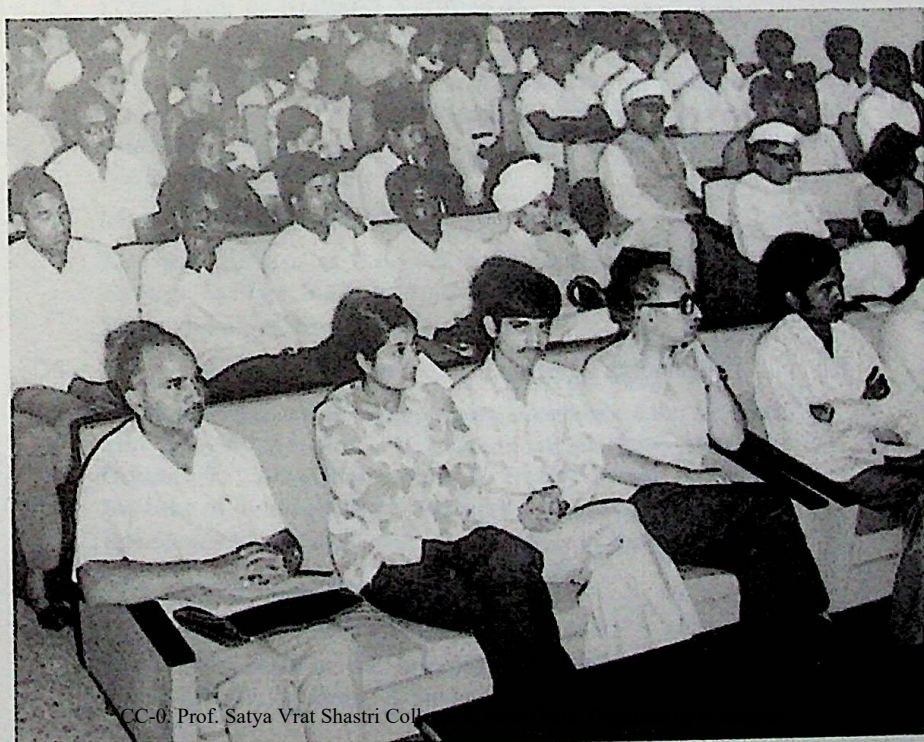
During the past years I have been called upon to deliver special or memorial lectures and inaugural, keynote and valedictory addresses at various seminars and conferences on a variety of topics. I had striven hard to infuse into them an element of originality and out of the box thinking. Strongly motivated by M. Monier-William's approach outlined by him in the Preface to his *Sanskrit-English Dictionary*, epitomised in the words which state that "for an Alpine climber to establish reputation in mountaineering he must ascend some peak, however comparatively insignificant, that has never been ascended before" (p. 9, footnote), I have striven to bring to bear on any topic I took up for study a fresh approach. During the past half a century or so of my studies and researches a corpus of newer and newer information I have been gathering in my quest for knowledge which I would like to share with all those who would care for it.

Some of the lectures and addresses included in the present volume have appeared in the volumes of proceedings of the respective seminars or conferences or as an independent monograph as in the case of the Contribution of Muslims to Sanskrit which I had presented as Dr. K. Nath Memorial Lecture at the Constitution Club in New Delhi under the auspices of the Institute of Indology, at that time located in New Delhi, but some of them, a larger number, have remained unpublished. With an idea that these also need to be brought out together with those already gone in print for their easy accessibility, I decided, accepting the suggestion of some of my well-wishers, to bring them out in the present volume. These have all been arranged chronologically, in the order of the year and the month in which they were presented. Except for three which deal with Vālmīki and his *Rāmāyaṇa*, each one of them covers a different topic. There should, therefore, be no problem in putting them in chronological order.

SAHITYA SAMITHI
NEW DELHI



Prof. Satya Vrat Shastri delivering Dr. K. Nath Memorial Lecture on "Contribution of Muslims to Sanskrit". On the extreme right is His Excellency Dr. B.D. Jatti, Acting President of India who chaired it. In the middle is Shri Mahendra Nath, founder of Dr. K. Nath Memorial Trust.



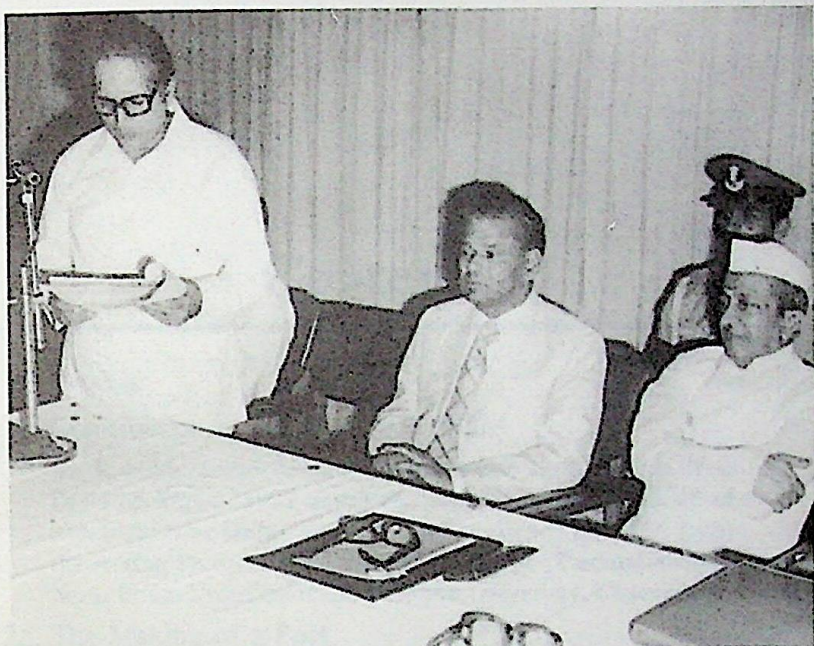
CC-0: Prof. Satya Vrat Shastri Coll

A view of the audience on the occasion.

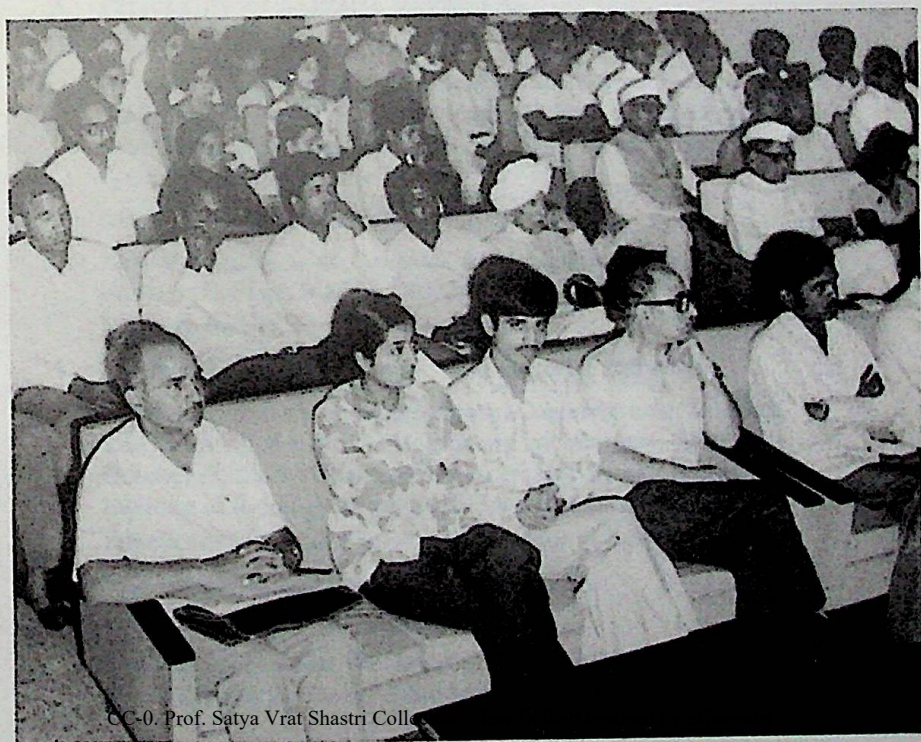
As can be seen from the details furnished in the Table of Contents and the footnotes on their starting pages, some of the Addresses were delivered quite some time back. For their being brought out now they had to be thoroughly revised and updated. The corpus of research material they comprise I very humbly place in the hands of scholars in the hope that they would find it useful in their studies and researches.

3 August, 2007.
New Delhi.

Satya Vrat Shastri



Prof. Satya Vrat Shastri delivering Dr. K. Nath Memorial Lecture on "Contribution of Muslims to Sanskrit". On the extreme right is His Excellency Dr. B.D. Jatti, Acting President of India who chaired it. In the middle is Shri Mahendra Nath, founder of Dr. K. Nath Memorial Trust.



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A view of the audience on the occasion.

महाराष्ट्र राज्य सरकार
मुंबई, महाराष्ट्र

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Contribution of Muslims to Sanskrit

In Medieval Period

The Hindu sciences were known to the Arabs before the advent of Islam. Indian drugs and spices were imported into Arabia in large quantities and the Quraish of Mecca handled this trade and came into frequent contact with India. Al-Haritha, an Arab physician and a contemporary of the Prophet, travelled to India where he probably studied Āyurveda. The Sanskrit language was probably properly introduced to the Muslim world when the Caliphate was transferred from Damascus to Baghdad in the second quarter of the Hijra (750 A.D.) and the Abbasids came to power. The well-known book on Astronomy, the *Sūryasiddhānta*, was translated from Sanskrit into Arabic by the command of the Caliph al-Mansur. Ibrahim al-Fazari and Yaqub B. Tariq did the translation with the help of a Pandit whose name is not preserved. During the same period a large number of Sanskrit medical works were translated into Arabic. The most important among them was the *Book of Shanāq* (Cāṇakya). The Arabs were greatly influenced by this book and by the ideas of Indians on toxicology. Jahiz Ibn Abi Usaybiyah and Ibn al-Nadim have given the names of a large number of Hindu scholars who were teaching Sanskrit to the Arabs and helping Muslim scholars in translating Sanskrit works into Arabic.

The association of Muslims begun under Caliph al-Mansur reached its zenith under Sultan Mahmud of Ghazni whose armies

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carried away al-Biruni from Kharzim to Ghazni in 1018 A.D. A profound scholar of Greek, Roman and the ancient Iranian sciences, Abu Raihan B. Ahmad al-Biruni was the first Muslim scientist who came to India in the vanguard of Mahmud's armies and who stayed on in the country to study Indian sciences and Hindu wisdom.

Al-Biruni not only learnt Sanskrit and read Hindu classics, such as the Purāṇas and the *Bhagavadgītā*, but also studied Hindu astronomy, mathematics, chronology, mathematical geography, physics, chemistry and minerology. After this preparation he wrote his monumental history *Tahqiq Ma Lil Hind*.

Al-Biruni translated not only Patañjali's *Yogasūtras*, Īśvarakṛṣṇa's *Sāṃkhyakārikā* and Varāhamihira's *Br̥hatsamhitā* and *Laghujātaka* into Arabic, but also translated Euclid's *Elements* and Ptolemy's *Almagest* into Sanskrit. During Sultanate period Amir Khusrau continued the great tradition of al-Biruni. During the same period Abdul Aziz Shams Lahauri translated the *Br̥hatsamhitā*. Another Muslim scholar whose name has been lost translated the *Amṛtakunḍa* into Persian under the command of Alauddin Khilji.

One of the oldest languages of the world, Sanskrit has grown and developed in India over the past thousands of years. Its literature consists of some of the finest specimens of human creation. It has been enriched by people of different cultural and ethnic groups, different religious and social backgrounds, different linguistic and speech habits. It is Indian in the true sense of the term, not possible to be associated with any particular community or group of people. Still in popular notion it has come to be associated with the Hindus just as Persian and Urdu have come to be associated with the Muslims. It is to remove this erroneous notion, arisen in all probability from lack of adequate information, that the present exercise is being undertaken.

It may in passing be pointed out here that there is a basic difference between the condition of Sanskrit and that of Persian/Urdu. The latter have been after the introduction of Islam in India for almost a thousand years the languages of the Muslim rulers enjoying the privilege of being the languages of State. If the Hindus took to them, they did so in all probability for gaining an access to the ruling class with all its attendant advantages. Again, these two languages, Persian and Urdu, were spoken at least by an important

section. There was no such outward advantage with Sanskrit. If in spite of this, non-Hindus, the Muslims in particular, patronized it, studied it and interpreted its vast literary wealth, they did so for the mere love of it. They were probably so deeply impressed with its charm, its sweetness, its rhythm and its richness that they thought to drink deep at its fountain-head, either directly or through translations.

It has been the special characteristic of the country that two parallel planes have continued to exist in it side by side. While on the actual plane it has accepted distinctions of caste and creed, on the intellectual plane it has discarded them, resulting in its development, in spite of a multiplicity of castes and creeds in it, as a haven of peaceful co-existence. There has as a consequence been a good deal of give and take between castes and castes and communities and communities. The quest of knowledge for the realization of the Supreme has been common to all the inhabitants of this ancient land. Any pious person or a spiritual leader would find adherents in it from all communities—Hindus, Muslims and Christians. It was in this country that Andal, a woman of low caste could win the veneration of the Alvars in the South. It was in this country again that the work of Pariahs like Thirupam could secure recognition from such stalwarts as Rāmānuja. The religious leaders who influenced large sections of society in their times like Caitanya of Bengal, Śaṅkaradeva of Assam, Tukārām of Maharashtra, Nānak of Punjab, to mention only a few, did not believe in the distinctions of caste and community and had among their adherents both Hindus and Muslims. As a more telling instance of this could be mentioned Rāmānanda who had Ravidāsa a shoe-maker, Kabir a Mohammedan weaver and Senā, a barber, among his disciples. Communal harmony was therefore ingrained in the very thinking of the country which had evolved itself along higher paths over the centuries. That is why the two principal communities in it, though maintaining their separate identity and following their separate religious practices, have achieved a kind of fusion that defies all description. Hindus visit Muslim saints and their Dargāhs and offer prayers. The Muslim saint Saiyad Ali-al Hujwiri is as much honoured by the Muslims as the Hindus. The same can be said of the disciples of Muinuddin Chishti and many others. It is again because of this that the Hussaini

Brahmins of Rajasthan are found following Mohammedan practices, though adhering at the same time to Hindu rituals and customs. It is again due to this that the Imam Shahi sect of the Muslims is seen following the authority of the *Atharvaveda* and of Nīṣkalaṅka. And it is due to this again that most of the Sufi saints like Nizamuddin Aulia, Fariduddin Shakarganj, Shah Inayat Shah Kalandar were initiated by Hindu spiritual leaders.

With such give and take among the Hindus and Muslims it was but natural for them to feel attracted towards the languages and the literatures of each other.

In the mediæval period arts and letters flourished under the patronage of rulers. If royal or official patronage had not been available to Sanskrit it would not have flourished to the extent it did. Many of the rulers of the period, especially the Mughals, and some of the high officials working under them extended their patronage to it. Of the Sanskrit writers patronized by them could be mentioned Bhānukara, Akabariya Kālidāsa, Puṇḍarika Viṭṭhala, Gaṅgādhara, Kṛṣṇa, Rudrakavi, Jagannātha Paṇḍita-rāja, Vedāṅgarāya, Amṛtadatta, Harinārāyaṇa Miśra, Vaṃśīdhara, Lakṣmīpati and so on.

Bhānukara or Bhānudatta enjoyed the patronage of emperor Sher Shah whom he eulogizes in one of his verses.

He also eulogizes Nizam Shah, identified with Burhan Shah of the Nizam Shahi dynasty, who ruled from 1510-1515 A.D. He was the author of eight works two of which are commentaries on his own writings.

One of the greatest of the poets of the 16th Century A.D. Akabariya Kālidāsa, as his very name shows, was indebted to Akbar for his patronage to him, which had probably prompted him to go in for this peculiar name which was his pseudonym, his original name being Govindabhaṭṭa. In his quite a few verses preserved in the anthologies he speaks of a number of kings of his time such as Rāmacandra of Rewa, who sent Tansen to Akbar's court, a king of Gurjara, Gurjarendra, King Jallala, a Vaghela king and one Dalapati.

Emperor Akbar was a great lover of literature and a number of Sanskrit poets, scholars and men of letters enjoyed his patronage. Bhānucandra and his disciple Siddhacandra wrote an exhaustive commentary on the *Kādambarī*. Bhānucandra, as he himself says

in the prefatory verses, was Akbar's favourite: *akabbarakṣmāpatidattamānaḥ*.

Rāmacandra wrote *Rāmaṇinoda* an astronomical work in Sanskrit for Rāmadāsa Bhūpāla, a minister of Akbar, which gives his (Akbar's) full genealogy. His brother Nīlakaṇṭha wrote *Toḍarānanda*, a work on Civil Law, Astronomy and Medicine for Todarmal, one of Akbar's ministers.

Behari Krishna Das wrote a work *Pārasīprakāśa* which, as the author himself states, was composed for the pleasure of Akbar: *akabaranṛparucyartham*, so were composed the work *Nītisāra* and *Nartananirṇaya* on music, dancing and so on by Gaṅgādhara and Puṇḍarika Viṭṭhala respectively.

As was Akbar so were his son Jehangir and grandson Shah Jehan. In the former's reign a scholar Śrīkṛṣṇa in whom he placed great confidence wrote *Bījanavāṅkura*, a commentary on Bhāskarācārya's Algebra and a poet Rudrakavi wrote three works, the *Kīrtisamullāsa*, and the *Dānāśhāhcarita* on emperor Jehangir, on the emperor's son prince Khurram and Akbar's son prince Danyal. In the latter's reign there flourished a number of Sanskrit poets and scholars, the most prominent of them being Paṇḍitarāja Jagannātha who wrote a number of works like the *Rasagaṅgādhara*, the *Bhāminīvilāsa*, the *Gaṅgālaharī* and so on and who spent quite a few of his earlier years under his benevolent patronage: *dillīvallabhapaṇipallavatale nītaṁ navīnaṁ vayah*, having been invited to his court when his fame had spread with the defeat by him of a Jaipurian Kazi at the disquisition concerning Islam. In a verse ascribed to him he praises the munificence of the lord of Delhi or the emperor. According to him it is either the lord of Delhi or the Lord of the universe who can fulfil people's desires:

*dillīśvaro vā jagadīśvaro vā manorathān pūrayitum
samarthaḥ.*

Of the gifts by other kings, he says: (They are too tiny), they can procure for us a vegetable or a pinch of salt in a meal:

anyair nṛpālaiḥ paridīyamānaṁ śākāya vā syāl lavaṇāya

According to a tradition he married a Muslim girl, Lavaṅgī. He enjoyed Shah Jehan's patronage in full. It was he who conferred on him the title of *Paṇḍitarāja* for his *Āsafavilāsa*, a work written by him in praise of Nawab Asaf Khan, brother of Nur Jehan and the minister of Shah Jehan: *sārvabhauma-śrīśāhajahāṇ-prasādādhigatapaṇḍitarājapadavīvirājitenā...* He is said to have left Delhi after the death of Dara Shikoh whom he greatly admired for his learning.

Among other writers of Shah Jehan's reign mention may be made of Munīśvara who wrote the *Siddhāntasārvabhauma* also called *Siddhāntatattvārtha*, a versified compendium of theoretical astronomy, *Niṣṣṭārthadūtī*, a commentary on the well-known mathematical work the *Līlāvatī* and *Marīci*, a commentary on the *Gaṇitādhyāya* and the *Golādhyāya* of Bhāṣkara's *Siddhānta-śiromaṇi* besides a small work, the *Pāṭisāra*; Bhagavatīśvāmin who wrote *Kāvyaavṛttiprabhoda* a treatise on metres used in Kāvya; Nityānanda who wrote two works on astronomy the *Sarvasiddhāntarāja* and *Siddhāntasindhu*, the latter at the instance of Asaf Khan, the minister of Shah Jehan: *so 'yaṁ vāsafakhāṇ vibhātī sakalāṁ varṇāśramāṇ pālayan tasya prerāṇayā*; Vedāṅgarāya who wrote a number of astronomical and religious treatises, the more prominent of them being the *Pārasīprakāśa*, dealing with the methods of conversion of the Hindu dates into Mohammedan and vice versa and Arabic and Persian names of the week, the months, the plants, the constellations and so on, which he wrote to please the emperor and gain his favour:

śrīmacchāhajahāṇmahendraparamaprītiprasādāptaye

Harinārāyaṇa Miśra no work of whom has come down to us except the two verses in the anthologies in one of which he praises his patron, the emperor Shah Jehan. It is interesting to note that it was not only the emperor who patronised Sanskrit scholars, his queen Mumtaz Mahal too did the same. Vamśīdhara Miśra, a Sanskrit poet of note, enjoyed her patronage. The anthology, the *Padyāmṛtatarāṅgiṇī* records a verse by him. There appears to have been a rivalry between the two great contemporaries Paṇḍitarāja Jagannātha who enjoyed the favour of the emperor and Vamśīdhara Miśra who enjoyed the favour of the queen. The said anthology has

a verse by the Paṇḍitarāja too. Both the poets through a verse each are interpreted to have a dig at each other.

The Paṇḍitarāja says that he does not find an elephant anywhere near him, not to speak of a lion, on whom he could show his prowess:

*digante śrūyante madamalinagaṇḍāḥ karaṭinah
kariṇyaḥ kārūnyāspadam asamaśīlāḥ khalu mṛgāḥ
idānīm loke 'sminn anupamaśikhānām punar ayaṁ
nakhānām pāṇḍityaṁ prakaṭayatu kasmin mṛgapatiḥ॥*

“The elephants with their temples soiled with ichor, it is heard, are at the end of the quarters, the she-elephants are an object of pity, the deer are no match in bearing. On what now in the world is the lion to show the skill of its claws with matchless rays of light?”

Varṇśīdhara Miśra says that the favourite of Mahādeva (oblique reference to Shah Jehan) is a bull. The favourite of Durgā (oblique reference to Mumtaz Mahal) is a lion. Since it enjoys Her favour (meaning that since he enjoys Mumtaz's favour) it does not find any body to test its prowess; not even the Śiva's bull, (meaning Paṇḍitarāja Jagannātha who enjoys Shah Jehan's favour, Śiva being taken as symbolic of him) for that is a bull after all:

*diinnāgāḥ pratipedire prathamato jātyaiva jetavyatām
sambhāvyasphuṭavikramo 'tha vṛṣabho gaur eva
gaurīpateḥ
vikrānter nikaṣaṁ karotu katamaṁ nāma trilokītale
kaṇṭhekālakuṭumbinīkaruṇayā siktāḥ sa kaṇṭhīravaḥ॥*

“The quarter elephants being in the species that they are accepted that they were conquerable, the bull of Śiva which could be supposed to have visible valour is (after all) a bull, To what should a lion drenched with the mercy of the consort of Śiva (= Pārvatī) is to turn to serve as touchstone to its valour?”

Not only the Mughals, other Muslim rulers or noblemen or officers too extended patronage to Sanskrit scholars and writers of their time.

King Shahabuddin, in all probability a ruler of Kashmir, had in Amṛtadatta a court poet in Sanskrit who recorded the fact of the despatch of a message by him (Shahabuddin) to one Mir asking him to desist from invading Kashmir.

King Burhan Shah of the Faruqi dynasty which ruled between 1320-1600 A.D. at Anandavalli at Khandesh had in Puṇḍarika Viṭṭhala, a writer of repute, who concentrated on writing on music in Sanskrit at his court. Viṭṭhala later shifted to the court of Madhava Singh of the Kacchapa dynasty at whose instance he composed the well-known work on music the *Rāgamañjarī*. He was also a favourite of Akbar, the Great.

Shayesta Khan, Aurangzeb's maternal uncle and general had in Caturbhuja, a poet and a rhetorician like Paṇḍitarāja Jagannātha. He composed the poem *Rasakalpadruma* in glorification of his patron.

Lakṣmīpati, a poet of the 17th cen. A.D., flourished during the reign of Aurangzeb's son Muhammed Shah the life-story of whose minister Abdullah he poetizes in his work, the *Abdullācarita*.

There is an old work called *Udbhaṭasāgara* (of unknown date) which has a verse that looks like having been composed by an anonymous Hindu poet as should be evident from the expression of disgust by invoking Lord Śiva where the lack of devoutness among both Hindus and Muslims is decried:

*na sandhyām sandhatte na niyamitanamājān prakurute
na vā mauñjībandham kalayati na vā sunnatavidhim ।
na rojām jānīte vratam api harer naiva kurute
na kāśi makkā vā śiva śiva na hindur na yavanaḥ ॥*

"Does not perform morning, noon and evening prayers, nor Namaz, does not wear girdle nor has undergone Sunnat; has no idea of Roza; does not go in for the austerities going with Hari; there is no Kāśi for him nor Mecca; he is neither a Hindu nor a Muslim".

The Muslim rulers and the noblemen not only extended patronage to Sanskrit by admitting Sanskrit poets and writers of eminence to their courts, providing them with all incentive and encouragement by honouring them and giving them help, financial or otherwise, to enable them to carry on their literary activities unhampered, they also extended patronage to Sanskrit by arranging for the translations of the classics into it. They were actuated herein by the desire to make this vast wealth of knowledge available to their co-religionists who had to have a thorough acquaintance with Sanskrit before they could execute their assignments. It is through their efforts that the translations into Persian of such works as the *Rāmāyaṇa*, the *Mahābhārata*, the *Bhāgavata-purāṇa* and so on were

undertaken and brought successfully to completion. It is interesting to note that at the instance of Akbar the translation into Persian of the *Rāmāyaṇa* and the *Mahābhārata* was undertaken. The *Rāmāyaṇa* was translated again during Jahangir's reign by Mulla Sadullah Masih. Sadullah spent twelve years in Varanasi studying Sanskrit.

It was Akbar's great grandson, the learned prince Dara Shikoh, who carried out the translation into Persian of the Upaniṣads under the title *Sirr-ul-Akbar*. He also translated the *Yogavāsiṣṭha* into Persian. Among his original compositions may be mentioned the *Samudrasaṅgama* on the technical terms of Hindu pantheism and Sufi phraseology and *Mukalamah-i-Baba Lal Das*, a dialogue between himself and Baba Lal Das in the course of which he dealt with the ideals of Hinduism. An interesting fact that bears reproduction here is that a condensed version of the *Mahābhārata* under the title *Razmnamah*, Book of War, was prepared under orders of Akbar. It was richly decorated with pictures. For its manuscript alone Akbar spent an amount equal to some 40,000 dollars. Abul Fazl contributed the preface to it and its copies were distributed under royal orders to nobles. Among other notable translations of Sanskrit works into Persian, under orders of Muslim kings, mention may be made of the *Atharvaveda* first by a converted Mohammedan of the South Abdul Quadir who could not complete it and later by Haji Ibrahim Sarhindi; the mathematical work, the *Līlāvātī*, by Faizi; the astronomical work, the *Karṇābharaṇa*, under the title *Gurraṭ-i-viz-Zijāt* by al-Biruni; the astronomical work *Tājaka* by Muquammal Khan Gujarati; the historical work, the *Rājatarāṅgiṇī* by Maulana Imamuddin; the *Harivaṃśa* by Nasarulla Mustafa; the *Pañcatantra* under the title *Kalilah Damnah* by Maulana Hussain Waiz. An easier adaptation of the last was also attempted under the title *Ayar Danish*. The Naladamayantī story was rendered into Persian under the title *Naldaman*. The *Dvātrīṃśatputtalikāsimhāsana* was translated into Persian by Abdul Quadir with the help of a learned Pandit under the title *Khīrad Afza-Namah*. The *Gaṅgādhara* and the *Maheśamahānanda* were translated under the general supervision of Abul Fazl.

Aurangzeb according to popular perception was opposed to music but it was during his reign that excellent Persian translations of two scholarly works on music were prepared. Faqirullah translated

the *Rāgadarpaṇa* while Mirza Rawshan Zamir translated the *Sanḡītapārijāta*. Mirza Fakhruddin compiled a book on Hindu literature and sciences titled *Tuhfatul Hind* (The Gift of India).

During the twilight of the Mughals the Muslims produced two great scholars of Sanskrit, Sirajuddin Ali Khan and Ghulam Ali Azad Bilgiramī. The latter wrote a book extolling the beauties of Sanskrit literature comparing them with Arabic rhetoric.

When Nadir Shah left India after looting and plunder he took with him not only jewels, gold and silver but also a hundred and thirty writers.

The first Bengali translation of the *Mahābhārata* was carried out under the orders of the Bengal ruler Nasir Shah (1282-1325 A.D.) to whom the well-known poet Vidyāpati dedicates one of his Padas. Similarly, emperor Hussain Shah was responsible for providing inspiration for the translation into Bengali of the *Bhāgavata-purāṇa*. His general Paragal Khan was equally devoted to Sanskrit learning. It was under his orders that Kavīndra Paramēśvara translated the *Mahābhārata* upto the Strīparvan which was listened to every evening by himself and by the congregation of his courtiers in his palace. His son Chuti Khan encouraged Śrīkaranandin to undertake a translation of the Āśvamedhikaparvan of the *Mahābhārata* which he successfully brought to completion.

The Muslims were not only great patrons of Sanskrit learning, they, at least some of them, were good writers as well in the language. A few verses of Shayesta Khan, the maternal uncle of Aurangzeb, are found in a manuscript of Caturbhuja's *Rasakalpadruma* which is preserved in Alwar Maharaja's Manuscript Library.

A more important Muslim composer in Sanskrit, however, is Nawab Abdul Rahim Khan-i-Khana, the noted literateur and the occupant of the highest post of Vakil under Akbar. He wrote nine works apart from preparing the Persian translation of the *Tuzk-i-Babari*, the autobiography of Babar in Turkish:

- (i) The *Dohāvalī*
- (ii) The *Nagara-śobhā*, a collection of 172 *Dohās*
- (iii) The *Barve Nāyikābheda*
- (iv) The *Barve*
- (v) The *Madanāṣṭaka*
- (vi) The *Phutakar-pada*

- (vii) The *Śṛṅgārasoraṭhā*
- (viii) The *Rahīma-kāvya* and
- (ix) The *Khetakautuka*, an astrological work.

Of these v, viii. and ix are in a mixed style, a commingling of Sanskrit and Persian/Arabic or Braj/Awadhi.

When the Mohammedans came to India from Arab lands and Iran they brought with them their languages, Arabic and Persian. For centuries these served as official languages. Later, due to local environments a local language with a preponderance of Arabic and Persian words under the name of Urdu came to replace them. Even while Arabic and Persian were the official languages of the Muslims, the local nobility continued to use Braj and Awadhi. Literary composition was predominantly carried out in them. Their beauty and grace attracted the Muslims too. They also took to them for their works. Sanskrit, though nowhere in the picture at the official or the popular level was by virtue of the vast fund of literature always on the side-lines. It could furnish to the literateurs of the period thoughts and images which they could incorporate in their works in their own media. A study of it was, therefore, considered useful for a high-quality literary production. It was this usefulness which prompted many a Muslim and Hindu writer of the medieval ages to take to its study. Creative writers, at least some of them, were attracted by its charm, its rhythm, its cadence, its richness. They started trying their hand at it. Alongwith it they continued with their own language, Urdu/Persian or Braj/Awadhi. Their writings, therefore, came to appear in all the three languages Persian/Urdu, Braj/Awadhi and Sanskrit. Sometimes they would write exclusively in Persian/Urdu or Braj/Awadhi or Sanskrit. The readers of the contemporary period could understand all of them. It created no difficulty if any one of them or all of them or any two of them were adopted in a composition. It would also prove the proficiency and the skill of the authors in different languages. This resulted in the emergence in the medieval ages of a literary style called the *Maṇipravāla* where one line in a couplet would be in Sanskrit and the other in Persian/Urdu or one line in Braj/Awadhi and the other in Persian/Urdu. The metre in each case would invariably be that of Sanskrit. Further, Persian or Arabic words would figure in a couplet with Sanskrit suffixes.

The earliest example of this is found in the verses of poet Lakṣmīpati, as for example:

- (1) *sa naro gostanīm tyaktvā karoti gostabhakṣaṇam*
- (2) *yatas tato mayā 'nuktvā jaharaṁ tyajyate vapuḥ*
- (3) *vajīreṣu ca yoṣitsu duṣmaṇī yair vidhīyate*
- (4) *phrāmosi na vidhātavyā baradāṣṭaṁ vidhīyatām*

The above style has been followed as stated earlier in three of his works by Khan-i-Khana too. In a pure Sanskrit verse in the beginning of his *Kheṭakautuka* he says that he is following in the footsteps of earlier writers who composed their works with an admixture of Persian vocabulary:

*phārasīyapadamiśritagranthāḥ khalu paṇḍitaiḥ kṛtāḥ
pūrvaiḥ
samprāpya tatpadapatham karavāṇi kheṭakautukam
padyaiḥ*

A verse from each of the three works of Khan-i-Khana where he employs the mixed style would suffice to give one an idea of it.

From the *Kheṭakautuka*:

*avvalakhāne yadā rāsaḥ khismanākaś ca kāhilaḥ
manujah svārthakartā syād bhaved bero tu jāhilaḥ*

"If Rāhu were to be in the Janmalagna, a person would remain unhappy, would be indolent, ugly, selfish, needlessly hostile and foolish."

From the *Rahīma-kāvya*:

*ekasmin divasāvasānasamaye main thā khaḍā bāga meṁ
kācit tatra kuraṅgabālanayanā gul toḍatī thī khaḍī
tām drṣṭvā navayauvanām śaśimukhīm main moha meṁ jā
paḍā
no jīvāmi vinā tvayā śṛṇu priye tū yāra kaise mile*

"One evening I went to a garden when a damsel with eyes like those of the young one of a deer was picking up flowers. When I spotted that young lady with a moonlike face I lost my consciousness. O my darling, listen, I can't live without you. How can I, O loved one, have you?"

From the *Madanāṣṭaka*:

*vigataghananiṣṭhe cāṇḍa kī roṣanāī
saghanaghananikuñje kāṇha vaṁṣī bajāī
sutapatigatanidrāḥ svāmiyāṁ choḍa bhāgīṇ
madana śirasi bhūyaḥ kyā balā āna lāgīḥ*

“The moon was shining in the cloudless midnight. Kṛṣṇa played on the flute in a thick bower. The Gopīs woke up and ran leaving their husbands and sons. O Cupid, what a great problem set on the head?”

Khan-i-Khana has not invariably followed the mixed style, he has written in pure Sanskrit also often times. A few of his Sanskrit verses are marked with intense spirituality and can easily steal the palm over similar compositions of the Vaiṣṇava saint-poets, e.g.,

*ahalyā pāṣāṇaḥ prakṛtipaśur āsīt kapicamūr
guho 'bhūc cāṇḍālas tritayam api nītaṁ nijapadamī
aham cittenāsmā paśur api tavārccādikaraṇe
kriyābhiḥ cāṇḍālo raghuvara na mām uddharasi kimī*

“Ahalyā was a stone. The army of monkeys was animal by nature. Guha was Cāṇḍāla. All of those three were taken by you to your abode. I am a stone in mind, an animal in offering you worship etc., and Cāṇḍāla in actions. O Rāma why don't you then come to my rescue?”

In the same strain is another verse of his that has gained wide currency in Sanskrit circles because of bringing out the absolute devotee in him to the point of total absorption of his thoughts in his Lord. In this he offers his own mind to the Lord, He being without it in Rādhā having taken it away:

*ratnākaro 'sti sadanaṁ gṛhiṇī ca padmā
kiṁ deyam asti bhavate jagadīśvarāya
Rādhāgṛhīta-manase 'manase ca tubhyaṁ
dattaṁ mayā nijamanas tad idaṁ gṛhāṇaḥ*

“The ocean, the repository of jewels, is thy abode. Padmā (Lakṣmī, the Goddess of Fortune) is thy wife. What is that which can be offered to thee, the Lord of the Universe? To thee who has lost His mind in Rādhā having carried it away I offer my own mind. Pray thou accept it”.

Tradition has it that once Jagannātha Triśūlī, a poet friend of Khan-i-Khana recited to him a couplet composed by him:

*prāpya calān adhikārān śatruṣu mitreṣu bandhuvargeṣu
nāpakṛtaṁ nopakṛtaṁ nopakṛtaṁ kiṁ kṛtaṁ tena॥*

"If by getting into office, which is impermanent, one did not harm the enemies, or favour the friends, or honour the relations, what has one done?"

Khan-i-Khana quietly listened to it, changed only the Mātrā in the first syllable in the second hemistich and recited it back:

nopakṛtaṁ nopakṛtaṁ nopakṛtaṁ kiṁ kṛtaṁ tena॥

What greatness! Even in the case of the enemies it should not be *apakṛtaṁ*, harm. It should be *upakṛtaṁ*, favour.

Khan-i-Khana also introduced the style of himself rendering

(i) some of his own verses

(ii) or those of earlier authors in Braj.

An instance of *i* is:

Sanskrit original:

*acyutacaraṇataraṅgiṇi śaśiśekharamaulimālātīmāle!
mama tanuvitarāṇasamaye haratā deyā na me haritā॥*

Braj rendering:

*acyutacaraṇataraṅgiṇī śivasira mālātīmāla!
hari na banāyo surasari kījo indava bhāla॥*

An instance of *ii* is:

Sanskrit original:

*yācanā hi puruṣasya mahattvaṁ
nāśayaty akhilam eva tathā hi!
sadya eva bhagavān api viṣṇur
vāmano bhavati yācitum icchan॥*

"Supplication takes away from a person his entire dignity. Intending to beg even the Lord turns dwarf in an instant".

Braj rendering:

*rahimana yacakatā gahe baḍe choṭa hvai jāta!
nārāyaṇa hū ko bhayo bāvana aṅgura gāta॥*

"O Rahim, taking to begging even a big man turns small. Even Nārāyaṇa (Viṣṇu) came to have a body measuring fifty-two fingers". Among other Muslims who could originally compose in Sanskrit mention may be made of Aurangzeb's half-brother the learned Dara

Shikoh. The late P.K. Gode of Poona had discovered a Ms. dated 1708 A.D. of the Mughal Prince's Sanskrit composition, the *Samudrasaṅgama* wherein are pointed out the common features of Hinduism and Islam. Since with the same theme the prince had written the work *Majmul Bahrain* (=the confluence of the two oceans) in Persian, it is difficult to say as to whether the Sanskrit work is merely a translation by the prince or by some Pandit of his Persian work. More important than the above work, however, is a letter written in Sanskrit by the prince which was published in 1940 in the *Brahmavidyā*, the *Adyar Library Bulletin*. This shows the unusual command of the prince over Sanskrit which he handles almost in the style of Bāṇa:

svasti śrīmadvaideya-nāthapadyā-rajahprapadyamānāgamyapūnyasamāsādyasattamādyaprasādyasammādyanigādyakavikadambavṛndārakādhipābhivādyanirantarāsvādyasudhāsamvādyasamvitsamvedyānavadyahṛdyagadyapadyavidhānavaiśadyaśālisarvavidyāpradyotanoddyotasadyaḥkhadyotīkṛtānindyavandyavādīndravṛndeṣu ॥ 4 ॥

After Dara Shikoh, the great name among Muslim creative writers of Sanskrit is that of saint Akbar Shah who adorned the court of Nawab Tana Shah of the Qutb Shahi dynasty of Golconda. Akbar Shah is also known as Kalimullah Hussain or simply as Bade Sahib. He is famous because of his very valuable work in Sanskrit the *Śṛṅgāramañjarī*.¹ In this the devout Muslim starts with paying respects to Hindu divinities and his preceptor, the Guru:

*guruṁ gaṇapatiṁ durgāṁ vaṭukaṁ śivam acyutam
brahmāṇaṁ girijāṁ lakṣmīṁ vāṇīm vande vibhūtayai*

"I offer salutations to Guru, (preceptor), Gaṇapati (Gaṇeśa), Durgā, Vaṭuka, Śiva, Acyuta, Brahmā and Sarasvatī".

Akbar Shah or Bade Sahib was born, as he informs us in the Introduction to his work, in the family of Saint Gesu Daraz who lived between 1321-1422 A.D. and who came to the Deccan during the time of Feroz Ahmed 1st of Bahamani.

The *Śṛṅgāramañjarī* like the *Kāmasūtra* of Vātsyāyana, is a work on Erotics. The author deals with the subject in a scientific and authoritative manner. He says that one of the special features of his

work is the description of the varieties of women called Padminī, etc. which the earlier works quoted by him had not dealt with. He deals with the varieties of the Nāyikās on the basis of the different kinds of moods and reactions in love and also classifies them by Guṇas. As regards the Nāyakas he mentions four types, Bhadra, Datta, Kumāra and Pāñcāla. The corresponding Nāyikā types are Hastinī Citriṇī, Śaṅkhinī and Padminī. The *Śṛṅgāramañjarī* elucidates some unknown facts in Nāyaka-Nāyikā relationship, gives more precise illustrations than those in the earlier treatises and wherever necessary abridges the treatment of the subject. The author's high conception of love with which he makes his definition of the Svīyā, Parakīyā and the Sāmānyā accord, is praiseworthy. Love, according to him, is only one indivisible object whether it is Svīyā or Parakīyā. It is to him an act of God: *daivayoga eva kāraṇam*.

Well-known scholars like Stein² have said that for a time Sanskrit was adopted as an official language by some of the Mohammedan rulers of Kashmir. Sanskrit inscriptions have been found on a number of Mohammedan tombs there. One of them on a tomb in the cemetery of Baha'uddin Sahib at Srinagar bears a date corresponding to A.D. 1484.

A stone inscription of Dhurail in the District of Dinajpur, West Bengal, of 1455, Saka Era records the construction of a bridge by one Faras Khan, Minister of Ministers in the reign of Muhammed Shah.³

While talking of the inscriptions mention needs to be made of the one on the silver coins of Sultan Mahmud, Hijri 418 (1018 A.D.). The coins have two sides. On one side in a circle they have the writing in Devanāgarī and on the other side in a circle in Arabic. The Devanagari has the words

- (a) *avyaktam eka [m]*
- (b) *muhammadah*
- (c) *[a] vatāra [h] nṛpa*
- (d) *ti [h] mahamūdah*

Arabic side has the words

- (a) *al-Qadir Billah*
- (b) *la ilahi al-Allah Muhammad Rasul allah*
- (c) *Amin al-dawala wa Amin almulk Mahmud*

As can be seen from the above the Devanagari version appearing on one side of the same coins is the Sanskrit rendering of that in Arabic. In this Allah is rendered by Avyakta and Rasul by Avatāra. La ilahi means one. La ilahi al-Allah means God is one. The same has been put in Sanskrit as *avyaktam ekam. Muhammad Rasul Allah* means Muhammad is the messenger of God. This has been conveyed by the words *Muhammadaḥ avatārah*.

The Gold Coins of Muizuddin Muhammad bin Sam (1193–1205 A.D.) also have Sanskrit writing on them:

1. [Śrī]ma[da]—

2. 2. [Mi]ra...mahā[ma] [da]...sa[ma]

[Śrīmaddhammūramuhammada] sāmā[putraḥ]

Hammīra, it may be pointed out in passing, is the Indian form of the Arabic word Amīr, commander, leader. The term in course of time came to be applied to kings, rulers and noblemen.

The National Museum, Kolkata has an inscription of the time of Aurangzeb (1657–1707), Śaka Year 1588, Bengali Year 1074 (1667 A.D.). Its language is Sanskrit and script is Bengali. It says that when Aurangzeb Badsha was the emperor, when Nawab Shaista Khan was the Governor of Gauḍamaṇḍala appointed by the emperor, when Ispinder Khan was the Jagirdar appointed by the Governor and Nandalāla was the Sikdar appointed by the Jagirdar, a Cāṇḍāla named Gopāla sold himself along with his wife, son and daughter to one Rāmajīvana Maulika at Rs. Nine only to free himself from debt:

Aṣṭāśītyadhikapañcadaśaśakaśatābde sullutānapratāpāntar-gatadhama[rai]

grāmāntargatakāyasthapādānivāsi śrīgopināthamajumadāra-sadasyane

strīputrakanyāsametaṁ ātmānam ṛṇāny apahatya svecchayā likhitavittadātri sthāpani

vikrītavān iti

Of the inscriptions a rather interesting one is the one found from Somnath where one side has Sanskrit and the other Arabic. Though the contents in both the versions are the same, the presentation in Sanskrit is more detailed. It gives an account of one Nuruddin Feroze who is said to be a sea-merchant called *nākhudā* in Arabic and *nauvittaka* in Sanskrit. The inscription was put up in 1264 A.D.

Daraf Khan who is identified with Jaraf Khan and who conquered Saptagrāma in Bengal is said to have written a hymn to the Gaṅgā⁴ called *Gaṅgāstrotra* which in its diction is simply remarkable. An example from it would bear it out:

*suradhuni munikanye tārāye punyavantam
sa tarati nijapunyaais tatra te kiṁ mahattvam/
yadi ca gativihīnam tārāye pāpinam mām
tad api tava mahattvam tan mahattvam mahattvam//*

“O the celestial river, the daughter of a sage, if thee delivereth a holy person, then what special is in that about thee? If thee were to deliver me, the sinner who has no other recourse, that is thy greatness; that greatness is greatness.

One of the most conspicuous monuments of the cultural intermingling of the Hindus and the Muslims is the appearance in the periodically increasing Upaniṣadic lore of the *Allopaniṣad* which reveals the means of the realization of Allah, God, as the Muslims would see it.

In Modern Period

The pursuit of Sanskrit by Muslims is not limited to the medieval or the early modern period only, it is being carried on even now. The number of Muslim Sanskrit scholars pursuing Sanskrit may not be very large but it is not too small either to be ignored. The very fact that there are some Muslims who have come forward to learn Sanskrit language and literature and acquire an amount of proficiency in it speaks well for the interaction and cultural integration in India which all of us so ardently desire. Some of these Muslims have a deep and abiding love for Sanskrit so much so that one of them, Shri Ghulam Dastgir of Bombay, sent out an invitation for the marriage of his younger brother in Sanskrit which reads as follows:

अव्यक्तमेकं महम्मद अकारः
इति गजनी महमूदस्य नाणके
गमनागमने चापि भासो भवति यद्यपि
समानो वर्धते मम अवश्यमुपस्थातव्यम्।
(रचयिता ग़ुलाम दस्तगीर)

मम चतुर्थपुत्र महम्मद इसहाक इत्यस्य शुभविवाहः श्रीगुलाबसाहिब शोखमहोदयस्य (भूतपूर्व इन्दापुरनगराध्यक्षस्य) कनिष्ठ-सुकन्यया रशीदा इत्यनया सह सुनिश्चितः कृतः।

अयं विवाहसमारोहः अस्य डिसेम्बरमासस्य एकविंशतितमे दिनाङ्के रविवसरे (21.12.1975) प्रातःसार्धदशवादनसमये (10.30) पौमलवाडीरेलयानस्थानक-समीपे विनिर्मिते मण्डपे समाराजितः भविष्यति इति समुदं निवेदये। अस्मिन् शुभावसरे भवद्भिः सपरिवारमागत्य शुभाशिषः समर्थयितव्या इति मनसा साग्रहं प्रार्थये।

भवदीया विनीता

मासूम बी अब्बास अली विराजदार

Shri Dastgir is one of the Sanskrit scholars honoured in 1976 by the Govt. of Maharashtra and is its Coordinator for Sanskrit at present.

In the early part of the present century a Muslim scholar of Aligarh Shri Habibur Rehman Shastri had devoted years to the study of Sanskrit and come to be known as Pandit Habibur Rehman Shastri. He published a commentary called the *Tattvaprakāśa* on the *Īsopaniṣad* besides a critique on Rasa called the *Rasadarśana*. He was a frequent contributor to the *Tattvacintāmaṇi*, a magazine published from Vrindavan.

Prof. Fatehullah Mojtabai, Former Cultural Counsellor of the Embassy of Iran in India is a noted Sanskrit scholar and a well-known exponent of Hindu philosophy. He has translated into Persian the *Gītā*, the *Laghuyogavāsiṣṭha* and the *Mahopaniṣad* with Notes and Text-study. During his stay in India he had delivered in New Delhi three Zakir Hussain Memorial Lectures on 'Hindu-Muslim relationship'.

Being one of the premier centres of learning for Muslims of India, the Aligarh Muslim University has led, among other subjects, to the spread of Sanskrit education among Muslims a number of whom have pursued it upto Post-Graduation and research.

The honour of being the first alumnus of that University who did Post-Graduation from there and was the first one to teach Sanskrit there goes to Habibur Rehman Shastri referred to above. His main interest was the comparative study of the Hindu-Muslim philosophy. To follow him was Dr. Nazir Mohammad, who having done Ph.D. in Hindi after Post-Graduation in Sanskrit from that University, got appointment there in the Department of Hindi where

he rose to the position of Professor and Head. Dr. Ayub Khan, another product of that University, is now Professor and Head, Department of Sanskrit, University of Kashmir, Srinagar, the first Muslim in all probability to occupy the post. The most illustrious product of that University so far has been Dr. Mohammad Israil Khan, Ex-Professor of Sanskrit, University of Delhi, who after obtaining the Ph.D. degree from that University had worked for some time in its Sanskrit Department before moving on to other places and who is the only one among the Muslim scholars of Sanskrit of India who got the State recognition in the form of the President of India Certificate of Honour in 2001 apart from winning many awards and honours from a number of institutions like the Sampurnanand Sanskrit University, the Vikramshila Vidyapeeth and the Uttar Pradesh Sanskrit Sansthan. He has published ten books and 105 research articles. Two of his books *Sarasvatī in Sanskrit Literature* and *Brahmā in the Purāṇas* have gone into second edition. A dedicated scholar, he continues with his studies and researches. His forthcoming titles are the *Naiṣadha* with explanation and notes, *Sources of Sanskrit Drama*, *Some Common Features of the Rgvedic Society and Culture*, *Glimpses of the Vedic Lore*, *A Peep in the Atharvavedic Herbs* and the *Etymologies in the Nirukta* besides three or four works of general interest. He has carried out a good survey of the present-day Muslim Sanskritists in his monograph in Hindi *Musalmānon kī Sanskrit ko Yogadāna*. Shortly he will be coming out with a collection of Sanskrit poems of his composition under the title *Samskṛtalatikāyāḥ Katipayāni Prasūnāni*. Apart from his work, critical and creative, he has furthered Sanskrit studies by guiding a large number of young scholars for the M.Phil. and Ph.D. degrees and attended many conferences and seminars, national and international.

Another notable Muslim scholar who received her education at the Aligarh Muslim University is Dr. Salma Mahfooz. She came to occupy the position of Professor and Head, Department of Sanskrit there from where she retired recently. She has the rare distinction of being the first Muslim woman to have done Ph.D. in Sanskrit. The topic of her research was "Sanskrit Nāṭakon meṁ Nāyikābheda", The Classification of Nāyikās (Heroines) in Sanskrit Dramas. She had got enrolled at the Department of Sanskrit, Aligarh Muslim

University in 1967 and had completed her work in the record period of two years, qualifying herself for the Ph.D. degree in 1969. In 1977 she brought out her work in book form. Under the research scheme of the University Grants Commission she worked on the *Samudrasaṅgama* of Dara Shikoh. Her three-year stay in Iraq from 1979-81 brought her in contact with Arabic as also the commonality between Hinduism and Islam propelling her to work on *Sirr-e-Akbar*, the translation of the Upaniṣads by Dara Shikoh. She translated the Persian gloss of the Prince (Dara Shikoh) on the first chapter of the *Bṛhadāraṇyakopaniṣad* into Sanskrit and published it with the original text of the said Upaniṣad. She also translated into Hindi the entire *Sirr-e-Akbar* with the original Upaniṣadic text. She is a frequent contributor to oriental research journals which have carried scores of her research studies.

Among others who studied at the same University, mention could be made of Dr. Mohammad Ali who did his Ph.D. on the "Etymologies in the *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa*" and is working at present in the Kishori Raman College, Mathura; a couple, Dr. Rukhsana Parveen who worked for her Doctorate on "References to Akbar the Great in Sanskrit Literature from 16th-18th Centuries" and teaches Sanskrit at the Govt. College, Bijnor and her husband Mr. Raunaq Ali who teaches Sanskrit at the Govt. College, Nuh (Haryana); Dr. Nizamuddin who did Ph.D. on "Prācīna Bhāratiya Sāhitya meṁ Varṇita Bhāratiya Khel"; Dr. Shakir Ali, who produced a thesis on "Bhoja ke Nāma se Pracalita *Yuktikalpataru* kā ek Ālocanātmaka Adhyayana"; Dr. Rizwana Begum Shamsi who did Ph.D. on "Pālī Tripiṭaka meṁ Sṛṣṭiprakriyā"; Dr. Shaheen Ahmad whose thesis was on "Akbarshah-kṛta *Śṛṅgāramañjarī* kā Ālocanātmaka Adhyayana"; Dr. Khalid-bin Yusuf who did Ph.D. on "Ṛgvedīya Ācāraśāstra"; Dr. Rizwana Parveen whose thesis was on "Paramānanda ka *Śivabhārata* : Samīkṣātmaka Adhyayana"; Dr. Shamim Ahmad who worked on "A Critical Study of the *Cidgaganacandrikā* attributed to Kālidāsa"; Dr. Nazni Parveen who did Ph.D. on "Hāriscandra kā *Jivandharacampū* : Ek Ālocanātmaka Adhyayana"; Dr. Nagma Sultan whose research topic was "Kavisamaya evaṁ Bṛhatrayī meṁ uskā Anupālana"; Dr. Ayesha Anwar who worked on "Bhojarājapraṇīta *Śṛṅgāramañjarīkathā* : Ek Samīkṣātmaka Adhyayana"; Dr. Wahid Nasroo who did Ph.D. on

“Rājasekharasūrikṛta *Prabandhakośa* : Ek Samikṣātmaka Adhyayana” and Dr. Marufur Rehman whose Ph.D. topic was “*Brahmavaivartapurāṇa* kā Dārśanika Adhyayana”. Apart from the above who did Ph.D., more than ten Muslims have done M.Phil. from that University.

Two of the old alumni of that University have association with the Rashtriya Sanskrit Sansthan, New Delhi. One of them, Dr. M.K. Durrani Shastri retired from there some years back while the other Dr. Mohammad Hanif Shastri is still in service.

Dr. M.K. Durrani Shastri, worked for his Ph.D. dissertation on “A Comparative Study of the Duties of Man as prescribed in the Gītā and the Koran” and wrote a commentary in Urdu on the *Uttararāmacarita* apart from publishing a few verses in the Mālinī metre on Viśvabandhutva, universal brotherhood, in the *Sanskrit Ratnākara* in addition to publishing articles in Sanskrit journals like the *Gāṇḍīva*, the *Surabhārati* and so on. Dr. Mohammad Hanif Khan Shastri wrote his thesis for the Vidyāvāridhi (Ph.D.) degree of the Kameshwar Singh Darbhanga Sanskrit University on the topic “Artha, Prayoga aur Māhātmya kī Dr̥ṣṭi se Mahāmantra Gāyatrī aur Sūrah Fātihā kā Tulanātmaka Adhyayana” which he later published under the title *Veda aur Qurān se Mahāmantra Gāyatrī aur Sūrah Fātihā*. His other publications include the *Mohanagītā*, the translation of the *Śrīmadbhagavadgītā* in easy Hindi verse (the title Mohana he picked up to indicate the first letter of the two parts of his name (Mo for Mohammad, Ha for Hanif and the last letter, of the last part of it, Khan, na), *Gītā aur Qurān meṁ Sāmañjasya, Vedon meṁ Mānava Adhikāra, Vaidika Sāhitya meṁ Mānava Kartavya, Mahāmantra Gāyatrī kā Bauddhika Upayoga, Mantraśāstra aur Upayoga* and *Yantramahimā*. Besides the above books he has published well over fifty articles in different magazines and journals. At present he is working on *Sanātana Dharma aur Islam : Samāna Dr̥ṣṭi* (Commonalities between Sanātana Dharma and Islam).

In the context of the Aligarh Muslim University reference had been made to the work on Dara Shikoh by Dr. Salma Mahfooz. Another scholar to work on Dara Shikoh is Dr. Ghulam Mustafā who produced a thesis through the medium of Sanskrit on the learned Mughal Prince under the title “Dārā Shikohasya Vyaktitvaṁ Kṛtitvaṁ ca” for the Vidyāvāridhi (Ph.D.) degree from the

Sampurnanand Sanskrit University, Varanasi. A good speaker of Sanskrit, he likes to write letters in Sanskrit a good number of which he has addressed to his supervisor Prof. Bhagirath Prasad Tripathi "Vagish Shastri", former Director of Research, Sampurnanand Sanskrit University which the latter proposes to bring out in course of time in the form of a monograph. From another University of Varanasi, the Banaras Hindu University, a gentleman the late Shaukat Sultan did M.A. in Sanskrit and taught Sanskrit at the Shibly National School at Azamgarh. From still another University of Varanasi, the Mahatma Gandhi Kashi Vidyapith, a Muslim lady, Dr. Naheed Abidi, did Ph.D. in Sanskrit on the twin deities Āśvins. A part time teacher in Sanskrit at the above Vidyapith and some other institutions for the past twenty years or so, she has taken up propagation of Sanskrit as a mission. Apart from her thesis on a Vedic topic which introduced her to Vedic lore, she has translated into Sanskrit under the title *Devālayasya dīpaḥ* the poem *Chiragh-e-dair* of the well-known Urdu poet Mirza Ghalib as also the poems of Rahim. Dr. Mohammad Sharif who is now teaching Sanskrit at the Aligarh Muslim University is a product of the Allahabad University wherefrom he did his Ph.D. on "Naladamayantīkathā kā Ālocanātmaka Adhyayana" and D.Litt. on "Sanskrit Kathā Sāhitya kā Ālocanātmaka Anuśilana". His wife Dr. Shaheen Jafri, also a Sanskrit scholar, had worked on "Hariharānanda-Āraṇya-kṛta *Bhāṣyavatī* kā Ālocanātmaka Adhyayana" and is presently teaching Sanskrit as Reader and Head at the National Shibly College, Azamgarh. Mr. Ausaf Ali, a specialist in Veda, is presently teaching Sanskrit at the Gorakhpur University. Dr. B.C. Hussaini of the Sri Venkateśwara University, Tirupati had worked for his Ph.D. on "A Study of the *Mādhavīya Dhātuvṛtti*." Three Muslim ladies of Saharanpur have done Ph. D. in Sanskrit from C.S.S. University, Meerut. One, Dr. Hamira Anjum, worked on "Mahābhārata meṁ Śāpa—Ek Vivecana", the second, Dr. Atiya Danish, on "Smṛti Sāhitya meṁ Gṛhasthāśrama" and the third, Dr. Shiba Parveen, on "Vartamāna Kāla meṁ *Manusmṛti* kī Prāsaṅgikatā." Dr. Atiya Danish's work was published in 2004 while that of Dr. Shiba Parveen is under publication. Dr. Atiya Danish is continuing with her researches. Under the U.G.C. Unemployed Women's Research Scheme she has undertaken a project on a "Study of the *Brahmacaryāśrama* in Smṛti Literature with reference to

Modern Period." There are about a dozen Muslim Sanskrit scholars who are teaching Sanskrit in different educational institutions full details about whom are being collected and will be put on record as soon as they are ascertained. Similarly are these being collected about unattached Muslim Sanskritists whose number could be fairly large. About Muslim women, some discontinued studies after M.A. or M.Phil. in Sanskrit and returned to family life. It is a task daunting enough to trace information about them.

Not all Muslim Sanskritists are in the teaching line or are connected with educational institutions or had any formal education. In the first category comes Dr. Nizamuddin, a Ph.D. in Sanskrit, as mentioned earlier, from the Aligarh Muslim University (he had worked on games in ancient Sanskrit literature), who is working at present as District Supply Officer at Badaun. In the second comes Mr. Bashir Ahmad Mayukh who, a simple farmer of Salpura of Kota District of Rajasthan has translated some of the Vedic hymns into simple Hindi and is recipient of the K.K. Birla Foundation's prestigious Bihari Award.

Of the Indian States it is in Kerala that there is a regular tradition of Christians and Muslims learning Sanskrit, unlike in other States where it is a casual phenomenon. It is not uncommon to come across there a good sprinkling of Christian and Muslim students studying Sanskrit along with their Hindu class fellows even in traditional institutions, the Gurukulas, Vidyālayas and what are called Sanskrit Colleges. It is a happy experience to see them specializing in such difficult branches of learning as Nyāya, Logic, Vedānta, Monistic Philosophy and Sāhitya, Poetics that require a high degree of application and dedicated effort in learning the rather abstruse texts replete with technical jargon. A couple of students of these institutions have completed their studies and are now teaching Sanskrit in one institution or the other. There is one Kadija Bibi who did her M.A. with Sāhitya Special from the Sanskrit College, Pattambi and is now teaching in the same institution after serving for a time in the Kendriya Sanskrit Vidyapitha, Pavaratti. A gentleman of the name of Puru Kannu is now a lecturer in the Govt. Sanskrit College, Thriruananthapuram after having passed from the same institution M.A. with Nyāya Special. He also worked for Ph.D. on the *Prastapādabhāṣya*. Abdul Rahman, another gentleman like

him is a lecturer in Sanskrit in Cochin College after having passed M.A. in Sanskrit with Sāhitya Special with a First Class First. In Kaladi, the birth place of Shankaracharya, a lady, Pathuma Bibi, who is just a house wife now, not serving anywhere, did her M.A. with Vedānta Special from the Govt. Sanskrit College, Thriruananthapuram with a First Class First. She did M. Phil. Another scholar matching Pathuma Bibi in brilliance is Zubaida Bibi who did her M.A. with Sāhitya Special from the Govt. Sanskrit College, Thriruananthapuram. She is now a lecturer in the Govt. Sanskrit College, Pattambi. The present Professor who till recently was also the Head of Department of Sanskrit at the Kerala University, Thriruananthapuram is Prof. Bashir Ahmad, a Muslim.

The writer of these lines had the opportunity of working in two Universities of Bangkok, the Chulalongkorn University and the Silpakorn University from 1977-79 and 1989-91. In both of these he had a colleague each from the Muslim community, Dr. Mrs. Pranee Lapanich and Dr. Mrs. Kusuma Raksamani. Dr. Pranee is an M.A., Ph.D. from the University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia and Dr. Kusuma, an M.A., Ph.D. from the University of Toronto, Toronto. For her M.A. dissertation Dr. Pranee worked on the 'Vipralambha Śṛṅgāra in Sanskrit Literature.' For her Ph.D. she worked on 'Kṣemendra and his *Kalāvīlāsa*.' Dr. Kusuma Raksamani worked for her M.A. dissertation on a study of the Sanskrit, Lao and Thai Texts on Pravāhlikā, a kind of Sanskrit short story. For her Ph.D. she worked on the Southern Recension of the *Tantropākhyāna* comparing in the course of her study the first part of the said work with that of the Lao and the Thai recensions. Dr. Kusuma is younger in age to Dr. Pranee, the latter having taught the former the Pali language. Interestingly enough, both of them have their private names, a practice common among Thai Muslims, which differs from their public names. Dr. Pranee's private name is Jamila and Dr. Kusuma's Maria. Dr. Pranee's main source for inspiration for learning Sanskrit was Dr. Chaluay, the former Head of the Department of Sanskrit in the Chulalongkorn University. While in the Fourth Semester, Dr. Pranee had read through the Thai medium such Sanskrit texts as the *Vetālapañcaviṃśati*, the *Hitopadeśa*, the *Dvātrīṃśatputtalikāśimhāsana*, the *Priyadarśikā*, the *Abhijñānaśākuntala* and so on. When she wanted to proceed further

in her Sanskrit studies, Dr. Chaluay, her Buddhist teacher, said to her as if to test the extent of her interest in the subject: "Pranee, you are a Muslim. You come from a different cultural background. You will not be able to carry on with a literature of a different culture." Dr. Pranee's answer to this was: "Madam, I am not only a Muslim, but a staunch Muslim. But my religion cannot come in the way of my Sanskrit studies. I shall pursue them." Dr. Chaluay would be all smiles at this and would begin to teach her with renewed vigour. Dr. Pranee can recite the Ayats of the Qoran with as much ease and felicity as the Mantras of the Vedas. When a friend had said to Dr. Kusuma the same thing as Dr. Chaluay had said to Dr. Pranee; her, Dr. Kusuma's, reaction was exactly the same as that of Pranee. Both of them are strongly of the opinion that religion has nothing to do with learning a language. The result is that both of them are scholars of Sanskrit in their own right.

Dr. Pranee has recently published her Thai translation of the *Manusmṛti*.

Before closing, a word is due here about the students studying Sanskrit at the School, College and the University level. Some of them have done exceedingly well in the subject. A notable example of this is Ayesha Sardar, daughter of Prof. Abdul Karim, Professor of Persian, Ahmadnagar College, who topped the list in 1973-74 in the subject of Sanskrit in S.S.C. Examination in the whole of the State of Maharashtra.

More recently, in October 2006, Shajeena S., a Muslim girl from Kerala, topped in the Kerala University M.A. Sanskrit examination. She is the first Muslim topper in the University's history. The 25 year old is the second of the three daughters of Shahul Hamid, a labourer. She opted for Sanskrit four years ago with her parents' blessings. When asked by some people as to why she did not choose Arabic in place of Sanskrit, Shajeena said that "Sanskrit is the most apt language for Indians since most Indian languages are its offshoots." When Shajeena recites *ślokas* at home, her family finds them melodious. She herself says that there is poetry in every syllable of them. She wants to launch a Sanskrit magazine to help Sanskrit lovers in India express their creativity. She wants some day to teach her children Sanskrit and mourns : "It is a shame this beautiful language is reduced to a Cindrella in her own land."

From what has been said above, it should be clear that the Muslims, both past and present, have done a lot for the cause of Sanskrit which they have owned, loved and fostered. They have proved, if proof was ever needed, that languages and literatures cannot be identified with any particular section of society. Sanskrit is as much of the Hindus as that of the Muslims. Like the varied channels enriching the waters of the sacred Gaṅgā it has continued to be enriched by different communities over the centuries. Hindus, Muslims, Christians, all have contributed to its growth and development. They, all of them, are a shining example of the close cultural synthesis of the different religions and races which makes for better cohesion in human relationship leading to a more peaceful, a more happy and a more purposeful life.

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2. *Kalhana's Chronicle of the Kings of Kashmir*, Vol. I, p. 130, f. n. 2; *Z.D.M.G.*, XL, 9; *Ind. Ant.*, XX, 153.
3. Sanyal, N., List of Inscriptions in the Museums of the Varendra Research Society, Rajshahi, p. 14.
4. *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*, Calcutta, Vol. XVI, 1847, pp. 393 ff.

Appendix

Excerpts from the Welcome Address of Padmabhushan Suraj Bhan;

The Institute of Indology was established two decades ago by Dr. Dharmendra Nath Shastri, formerly Dean of Arts Faculty, Agra University and Dean of Indic Studies, Kurukshetra University and Prof. Veda Vyasa, Senior Advocate, Supreme Court. The late Dr. Mehr Chand Mahajan, Chief Justice of India was its Founder President.

As a part of the programmes of the Institute for the promotion of the study of Indian Culture which is essentially a composite culture, we have organised this evening's function which is a lecture by Dr. Satya Vrat Shastri, Professor of Sanskrit in Delhi University on 'The Contribution of Muslims to Sanskrit'. The importance of the subject cannot be over-emphasised, from

the social and cultural point of view. We are singularly lucky in having Dr. Satya Vrat to give us a talk on this comparatively neglected subject. Dr. Satya Vrat Shastri is one of those few scholars of Sanskrit in the country who have made a mark in both the widely different fields of critical scholarship and creative composition. His literary work consists of some of the most delightful poems and dissertations on some of the toughest problems of Indology. It is the combination in him of the poet and the critic, the playwright and the interpreter of our tradition that marks him out as one of the most notable figures in the field of Sanskrit today.

On behalf of the Institute, I accord him a hearty welcome. All of us look forward to listening to an illuminating discourse which should provide us a peep into a subject which, as most of you will agree, deserves much larger attention than it has received so far.

Excerpts from the Presidential Address of His Excellency Dr. B.D. Jatti, the Acting President of India;

I am grateful to the authorities of the Institute of Indology for affording me an opportunity to listen to the illuminating lecture this afternoon on the Contribution of Muslims to Sanskrit by Prof. Satya Vrat Shastri. It reveals many an unknown fact about the connection that Muslims have with Sanskrit. It is heartening to note that a large array of Muslims over the centuries have either extended patronage to it thus encouraging its study or have written in Sanskrit. This proves, as has been very forcefully put forth by Prof. Shastri, that Sanskrit belongs as much to the Muslims as to the Hindus. I may refer here to the encouragement and support given to Sanskrit by the mediaeval Muslim rulers, in particular some of the Mughals and their ministers which has been set forth in detail by Prof. Shastri in his erudite lecture. Lectures such as these will surely help to demolish the artificial barriers between the two principal communities of India, the Hindus and Muslims and expedite national integration.

India developed over the centuries a thinking wherein happily there was little scope for linguistic exclusiveness. It was

catholic enough to have a close look at different languages and literatures and to adopt them as its own.

It is ignorance of each other's thoughts and insufficient appreciation of each other's literatures that separates communities. The fact that the very title of this lecture may surprise some people underscores this ignorance and the necessity to remove it. The point needs to be emphasised that Sanskrit and all that it represents is not confined to only a particular community or social group but is a part of our national life as a whole. The very sight of the Muslims taking to Sanskrit is sure to fill the hearts of the Hindus with delight and likewise the sight of the Hindus taking to Urdu and Persian will delight the Muslims, inculcating in them the sense of belonging to each other, which is a pre-requisite for any kind of unity.

The Making of a Poet

What makes one a poet is a perennial question with thinkers. Emotions every body has. But not all have the same degree of excitement in them. Thus, it was given to Vālmīki alone to get so much excited by the scene of the killing of a Krauñca bird in union with its mate by a hunter that his emotion had burst out in a style and manner that he was not able to make out himself : *kim idam vyāhṛtaṁ mayā*.¹ The stress on the sage proved too much for him and he, unable to control himself, created something which earned for him the title of Ādikavi and his work the title of Ādikāvya.

The word *kāvya* literally means *kaver bhāvaḥ*, the being of a poet or *karma vā* or his work. Both these meanings go well with the poem. *Kāvya* is the very being of a poet, the work which mirrors him, which reflects him. Through it the very personality, the very make-up of its creator can be made out or peeped into.

Indian rhetoricians vie with each other in explaining what poetry or *kāvya* is. Every one of them has tried to define it in his own way. The result : there are numerous definitions of poetry available now. According to tradition, Bhāmaha's *śabdārthau sahitau kāvyam*,² the word and meaning in unison is *kāvya* or poetry, is the earliest of these.

Indian works on rhetorics do not present a systematic treatment of the creation of poetry. Information about it, however, is available in their treatment of the (sources) of poetry, the *Kāvya hetuḥ*. The poetic genius or the *pratibhā* is the first pre-requisite of creating poetry. As Bhāmaha puts it, even dullards can learn Śāstra from a teacher. Poetry, however, comes from that one who has the genius for it:

Keynote Address at the National Seminar on "Relevance of Sanskrit Poetics to the Study of Modern Aesthetics", Utkal University, Bhubaneswar, December 7, 1986. Chair: Hon'ble Shri J.B. Pattnaik, Chief Minister of Orissa.

*gurūpadeśād adhyetuṁ śāstraṁ jaḍadhiyo 'py alam ।
kāvyam tu jāyate jātu kasyacit pratibhāvataḥ ॥*³

Though genius or *pratibhā* is the pre-eminent factor, in creating poetry, there are certain other contributory factors as well. Both these put together create poetry. The contributories, as mentioned by Daṇḍin, are the pure knowledge of the Śāstra, (*nirmalaśruta=sāstrajñāna*) and constant application *amandaḥ abhiyogaḥ*,⁴ Rudraṭa⁵ and Kuntaka⁶ too accept the very three, one primary and the two contributories, as the source of poetry; *śakti*, *vyutpatti* and *abhyāsa*. Vāmana mentions the three under the names of *loka* (*lokavyavahārajñāna*), the wordly knowledge; *vidyā*, the knowledge of the Śāstras which include *śabdasmṛti*, the correctness of words; *abhidhānaśāstra*, the lexicons; *chandoviciti*, prosody; *kalā*, arts (like music, dance etc.); *kāmaśāstra* the science of erotics; and *daṇḍanīti*, judicature and *prakīrṇa*, miscellaneous. Under *prakīrṇa* Vāmana includes six: *lakṣyajñatva*, the practice of the *Kāvyas*, *abhiyoga* application, *vṛddhasevā*, the service to the elders, the acquisition of knowledge through the teachers, *avekṣaṇa*, the choice of appropriate words, *pratibhāta* (*pratibhā*) the genius and *avadhāna*, concentration. Mammaṭa presents all these in a condensed form in his well-known *Kārikā*:

*śaktir nipuṇatā lokaśāstrakāvyādyavekṣaṇāt ।
kāvyajñāśikṣayābhhyāsa iti hetus tadudbhave ॥*⁷

Poetic genius, knowledge born of the study of the world, of sciences and of poems and the practice of writing poetry under the instruction of those versed in writing poetry—all these together constitute the source of poetry.

Since *pratibhā* is the primary source of creating poetry, it would do to pause here and try to fully comprehend its signification as expounded by Rudraṭa who calls it by the name of *śakti* which he explains as:

*manasi sadā susamādhini visphuraṇam anekadhā
'bhidheyasya ।*

*aklistāni padāni ca vibhānti yasyām asau śaktiḥ ॥*⁸

Śakti is that by which a poet expresses the various ideas appearing in his mind in concentration through easy words. According to Bhaṭṭa Tauta, *pratibhā* is the intellect giving rise to newer and newer ideas. Abhinavagupta defines *pratibhā* as *apūrvavastunirmāṇakṣamā prajñā*,⁹ the intellect capable of creating unique things. Mammaṭa takes it as a kind of impression which is of the form of poetic seed, *kavitvabījarūpaḥ saṃskāraviśeṣaḥ*.¹⁰ Jagannātha explains it as the appearance of words and meanings appropriate to the creation of a *kāvya* : *sā (pratibhā) kāvyaghaṭanānukūlaśabdārthopasthitih*.¹¹

The central point of all these explanations is that the poet is one who has the capacity in him to present things in words and meanings going well with them. This is what Rājaśekhara means by his term *kārayitrī pratibhā*,¹² and Rudraṭa by his *sahajapratibhā*,¹³ the creative faculty or the natural faculty. In composing poetry, it is this natural faculty which is the mainstay of a poet. It is not possible to compose a poem on the basis of the Sāstric or worldly knowledge, *vyutpatti* or application or *abhyāsa*, practice alone. A mere factual description of something in metres does not make a composition a poem. It would just be what Bhāmaha calls as *vārtā*, a factual statement:

*gato'stam arko bhātīnduḥ yānti vāsāya pakṣiṇaḥ ।
ity evamādi kiṃ kāvyam vārtām enām pracakṣate ॥*¹⁴

"The sun has set, the moon shines, the birds proceed to their nests—are these and such other sentences *kāvya*, poetry?" It is (just) *vārtā*, a factual statement. Nor would the mere prefixure of the expressions like 'excellent', or 'extremely' would lead to the diction gaining in charm : *na nitāntādimātrena jāyate cārutā girām*. The very ordinary words that we use in our day-to-day life and the meanings in which we use them the poets so put that they cast a spell on the worlds:

*yān eva śabdān vayam ālapāmaḥ
yān eva cārthān vayam ullikhāmaḥ ।
tair eva vinyāsaśiṣeṣabhāvaiḥ
sammohayante kavayo jaganti ॥*¹⁵

So in reality it is the *pratibhā* which makes for poetry. The inclusion of *Gunas*, *Qualities* or *Figures of Speech* or *Alaṅkāras*

does not make it. Though Daṇḍin accepts learning, *śruta* and effort, *yatna* as leading to the grace of Sarsvatī, which in the present context is the creation of poetry, even without *pratibhā* in certain cases:

*na vidyate yady api pūrvavāsanā
guṇānubandhi pratibhānam adbhutam ।
śrutena yatnena ca vāg upāsītā
dhruvaṁ karoty eva kam apy anugraham ॥*¹⁶

Ānandavardhana seems to disagree with him when he says that the shortcoming of a poet, because of lack of learning *avyutpatti* is concealed by *śakti* or *pratibhā*. The shortcoming due to lack of *śakti* quickly comes to the fore:

*avyutpattikṛto doṣaḥ śaktyā saṁvriyate kaveḥ ।
yas tv aśaktikṛtas tasya jhaṭity evāvabhāsat ॥*¹⁷

He seems to convey the view that it is *pratibhā* alone which is the real source of poetry. Hemacandra and some other Ācāryas are also of the same view. They take *vyutpatti* learning and *abhyāsa*, practice as leading to the refinement of *pratibhā* and not to the creation of poetry : *pratibhāsyā hetuḥ, vyuttyabhyāsābhyāṁ saṁskāryā*.¹⁸ This view seems to have its own strength. *Pratibhā*, the poetic genius, the capacity to create poetry, does need strengthening with learning, *vyutpatti*, the knowledge of the Śāstras and that of the world as also constant practice of poetry to make it more attractive and appealing. If a poet were to have his composition examined by a discerning critic and take to heart some of the useful suggestions offered by him in good faith, his poetry would definitely register gradual improvement.

Rājaśekhara mentions three types of poets, Sārasvata, Ābhyāsika and Aupadeśika. Of these Sārasvata is one whose poetry flows out because of the impressions of the earlier births. Ābhyāsika has his speech acquiring the sheen of poetry because of constant practice. Aupadeśika learns the art under instructions and is not endowed with natural flair for composing poetry and to that extent is of inferior capability and his poetry lacks substance. He differs from the view of the authorities on

the subject who propound that equipping the intellect is not necessary for the flow of poetry. If the talent is there, it has to flow forth; the grapes sweet by nature may not need brewing: *nahi prakṛtimadhurā drākṣā phāṇitasamskāram apekṣate*. According to him the twofold activity leading to the accomplishment of the same objective will redouble the effect: *ekārtham hi kriyādvayam dvaiguṇyāya sampadyate*. The natural talent in itself is not adequate. It has to be supplemented by constant practice, *abhyāsa* or *amanda abhiyoga* under the supervision of those who know what real poetry is, *kāvyajñā*, that will raise it to a higher level and that is what is needed : *utkarṣaḥ śreyān iti yāyavariyaḥ*. The higher the improvement, the better the poetry. It is this which is responsible for the gradation of the poets; some good, some very good, some excellent. To use the phraseology of Rājaśekhara.

*ekasya tiṣṭhati kaver gṛha eva kāvyam
anyasya gacchati suhrdbhavanāni yāvat |
nyasyadvidagdhavadaneṣu padāni śaśvat
kasyāpi sañcarati viśvakutūhalīva ||*¹⁹

"There is a poet whose poetry stays back in his house only. There is another one whose poetry goes up to the houses of his friends. There is however one such whose poetry placing its feet in the mouths of the connoisseurs has a free movement curious (to see) the world as it were".

The question may well arise over here : Is the *pratibhā*, the poetic genius, the natural capacity to create poetry, the same with every poet? The answer is 'no' which should be clear from the marked differences in the quality of compositions of different poets. According to Kuntaka²⁰ the composition of poets differs according to their nature, *svabhāva*. Some follow the tender *sukumāra*, path some the peculiar one *vicitra* and some the mixed one, *madhyama*. In the context of the creation of poetry this would mean that in composing a poem the nature of the poet also plays its part. That is why some poets are more successful in depicting certain sentiments and not others. An example *par excellence* of this are *Kalidāsa* and *Bhavabhūti*. While one excels in depicting *śṛṅgāra*, the other excels in

depicting *karuṇa*. Interestingly, Bhavabhūti did try his best at depicting *śṛṅgāra* and *vīra* in his *Mālatīmādhava* and the *Mahāvīracarita* respectively but could not gain the measure of success he did in depicting *karuṇa* in his *Uttararāmacarita*.

The six qualities of *kāvya* *aucitya*, *saubhāgya*, *mādhurya*, *prasāda*, *lāvaṇya* and *ābhijātya* are enumerated by Kuntaka who also hints at the nature of the poet composing a piece. The first two of these are common to all the poets to be met with in all the three styles *sukumāra*, *vicitra* and *madhyama*. As for the remaining four, Kuntaka accepts them to be of different types going well with the *sukumāra* and the *vicitra* styles.

A point worth considering here is : What part does the mental state of the poet play in his composition? Nothing has specifically been said on this point in Indian works on rhetorics. A few indications are indeed to be met with here and there. Of the sixfold aims and objects of poetry as enumerated by Mammāṭa, the fifth one, *sadyaḥ paranirvṛti*²¹, instant and perfect happiness is of particular significance. If in this context the audience has it, the poet too has it. For that particular moment the poet is a *sahṛdaya*, vide Abhinavagupta : *kavir hi sāmājikatulya eva*²² or *rasāsvādanakāle kaver api sahrdayāntaḥpātivāt*.²³

As per the theory of *Rasa*, any worldly incident ceases to be so and assumes universalization transcending the bounds of time and space. The poet then like his audience has the worldly causes, the effects, and the accessories transformed into *vibhāvas*, *anubhāvas* and *sañcāribhāvas* and gets freed from the considerations of belonging to one's self or to somebody else or just remaining indifferent. It is in this state of having no other consideration in his mind, *vedyāntarasparśasūnya*²⁴, that he takes up his pen or moves his speech to sketch out the entire cycle of incidents. He has at that time a dual personality. On account of relishing *rasa* he is a *sahṛdaya*, on account of writing or creating poetry he is a *kavi*. In reality his writing is only an external manifestation of his internal process of thoughts and ideas, emotions and sentiments.

Many of the rhetoricians including Vāmana and Rājaśekhara have laid great stress on the aspect of concentration in creating

poetry. Kālidāsa too has hinted at it in different ways in a number of his works. As a specimen just one incident may be mentioned. When Agnimitra looks at Mālavikā's portrait, he feels attracted towards her. He has, however, the lurking suspicion that the painter might have overdone her beauty. When, however, he is face to face with her, he has the feeling that he, the painter, could not capture her beauty due to his being not in full concentrated action:

*citragatāyām asyām kāntivisaṁvādaśaṅki me hṛdayam ।
sampratī²⁵ śīthilasamādhim manye yeneyam ālikhitā ॥*

If the portrait could be failing in proper portrayal, due to the painter being *śīthilasamādhī*, the same could well be the state of a poetic composition if its author were to be *śīthilasamādhī*. His description could then get diffused, robbing it of much of its impact.

Normally, a poet through his imaginative faculty gives a poetic form to worldly objects. Some, however, he invents himself. These are called in Poetics as *kavipraudhoktisiddha*²⁶ and *kavinibaddhapraudhoktisiddha*.²⁷ An old verse very graphically brings out this faculty of the poet. He is the master of his creation, a creator who fashions the world the way he likes:

*apāre kāvyasaṁsāre kavir eva prajāpatiḥ ।
yathāsmāi rocate viśvaṁ tathedam parivartate ॥²⁸*

He has all the time something or the other going in his mind, his own *Bhāva*, the inner process of his emotions and ideas : *kaver antargataṁ bhāvaṁ bhāvayan bhāva ucyate*.²⁹ It is these emotions and ideas which differ with each poet and make him impart a personal touch to his compositions. Even while different poets take up the same theme with the same characters, their treatment differs. A number of poets, as for example, have handled the Rāma story but the impact of each one of them is different from the other. Rāma of the *Uttararāmacarita* and Rāma of the *Kundamālā* are wide apart from each other because of the different perceptions of the authors of these works which also accounts, along with the imaginative faculty, for the variations in the theme. The innovations in the sketching of the characters is also the direct result of this. When handled by

poets like Kālidāsa, characters like Duṣyanta and Śakuntalā turn into their mental progeny, their own creations, shaped and fashioned by them in their own light.

A question may well be posed here : Is a poet thinking of his audience, his readers and spectators, while composing his work or is he writing for his self-expression only? The answer to this could be that no poet of any consequence would write just for self-expression. He has always his audience before him. Willy nilly he expects an appreciation from it. When he is not able to get it, he feels sad and disheartened as did Bhavabhūti who bemoaned his lot and hoped that there would be born somebody in future with the same wavelength as his to appreciate his work : *utpatsyate tu mama ko 'pi samānadharmā*.³⁰ Most of the creative works of the classical Sanskrit period were composed for learned assemblies *abhirūpabhūyiṣṭhā pariṣad*,³¹ the *vidagdhaḡoṣṭhī* or *kaviḡoṣṭhī*. When there was more of involvement of the ordinary folk, the poets had to adjust their works to their language and expression.

Rajaśekhara in his *Kāvya-mīmāṃsā*, in the section *Kavirahasva* gives a graphic and detailed description of what a poet needs to have to create poetry which is to be cultivated as an art. A poet has to acquire knowledge of *vidyās* and *upavidyās*, before he is to start writing poetry, *grhitavidyopavidyaḡ kāvyakriyāyāṃ prayateta*. The *vidyā*³² he explains as *nāmadhātupārāyaṇa*, grammar, *Abhidhānakoṣa*, the lexicons, *chandoviciti*, prosody and *alaṅkāraṇtra*, poetics. The *upavidyās* are the sixty four *kalās*. Besides, he has to keep company with the good source-poets, have knowledge of places, have scholarly assemblies. He also needs to go through the works of earlier poets. According to Rājaśekhara there are eight sources which he calls as mother, *mātaraḡ* of poetry, *kavitvā* These are:

*svāsthyaṃ pratibhā 'bhyāso bhaktir vidvatkathā
bahuśrutatā ।*

*smṛtidārdhyaṃ anirvedaś ca mātaro 'ṣṭau kavitvasya ॥*³³

Good health, poetic genius, practice, devotion, discussion with scholars, learning, good memory, non-dejectedness.

Further, according to Rājaśekhara, a poet has to have purity of mind, body and speech. His very physical appearance should exude cleanliness and attractiveness with his hair and nails cut, the betelnut in the mouth, and costly, but non-gaudy dress, with flowers tucked in the hair. He would then present the very right type for a poet. His entire bearing should be of the kind as to betray his calm, contented and composed inner self which could bring out his thoughts in the best manner possible. The poet should speak with a smile, utter words pregnant with meanings, and should try to look for a secret from all over. He should desist from finding fault with what somebody has not said and should interpret correctly what he has said. Again, the house in which he is to live should be well cleaned, surrounded by trees and gardens with places appropriate for six seasons, the pleasure hillock, the oblong tanks and the lakes with birds and animals. If the poet be ever tired of composing poetry, his attendants should silently obey his command to remove his fatigue or should leave him all by himself. They should as per their sex and place of work be adept in different languages. He should have around him a scribe versed in different scripts, with a good hand, knowing different languages, quick in speech, taking cue just from indication and expression and be himself a poet and a scholar.

Going on in this vein Rājaśekhara further says that a poet must have always near him a box, a board with chalk, leaves of the *tādī* tree or bark of the *bhūrja* tree with pens and inkpots, leaves of the *tāla* tree with iron nails and well rubbed plates. All this according to authorities on the subject, as quoted by Rājaśekhara, is the equipment, *parikara*, for the poetic art : *tad hi kāvyavidyāyāḥ parikara ity ācāryāḥ*.

The training of a poet consists not only in his learning the *Vidyās* and the *Upavidyās* and perusing the works of earlier masters but in his self-assessment as well. Before writing poetry, a poet has to properly estimate his own equipment for it, his proficiency in language as also to gauge the taste of audience. He has to carefully assess as to what is going to appeal to it.

He has to participate in poetic assemblies where his compositions could be judged by connoisseurs. Kings are required to organize such assemblies.

Rājaśekhara, with a penchant for detail, traces the routine of a poet from morning to late in the night in the *Kāvyamīmāṃsā* which can be conducive to his creation of poetry. In the case of Rājaśekhara a point that needs to be appreciated is that though he gives all the details about what he calls after the ācāryas of old the *parikara*, the equipment of a poet : *tad dhi kāvyavidyāyāḥ parikara ity ācāryāḥ*, he sticks to the basic view that it is the poetic genius alone which is his real *parikara*—*pratibhaiva parikara iti tu yāyāvariyaḥ*. The rest of the things merely serve to assist in sharpening it which in the case of some may be a necessity, not all being equally endowed with it.

The making of a poet is a complex phenomenon. Though coming naturally to one gifted for it, it has to be supplemented with good knowledge of śāstras and men and matters and the instructions of connoisseurs as also regular practice. Essentially it is the innate capacity that makes one a poet. Not every one has that capacity and so not every one is a poet. *Poets are born and not made*. The expression 'making of a poet' can only mean the developing of the innate gift to create poetry with all the necessary accessories from out of the depth and the fullness of the heart.

References

1. *Rāmāyaṇa*, 1.2.16.
2. *Kāvyālaṅkāra*, 1.16.
3. *ibid.*, 1.5.
4. *Kāvyādarśa*, 1.103.
5. *Kāvyālaṅkāra*, 1.14-15.
6. *Vakroktijīvita*, ed. S.K. De, Calcutta Oriental Series, 2nd. ed. Calcutta, 1928, p. 46.
7. *Kāvyaprakāśa*, 1.3.
8. *Kāvyālaṅkārasūtravṛtti*, 3.3.
9. *Kāvyālaṅkāra*, 1.5.
10. *Kāvyaprakāśa*, Sahitya Bhandar, Meerut, Samvat 2017, p. 13.
11. *Rasagaṅgādhara*, Nirnaya Sagar Press, Bombay, 1916, p. 8.

12. *Kāvya-mīmāṃsā*, Gaekwad Oriental Series, Oriental Institute, Baroda, 1934, p. 12.
Rājaśekhara divides *pratibhā* into two, *kārayitrī* and *bhāvayitrī*, the creative and the critical. Rudraṭa gives the name *sahajā* to *kārayitrī* though Rājasekhara takes it as one of the three types of it : *sāpi trividhā*, *sahajā* 'hāryaupadeśikī' ca, inborn, acquired and instructional. *Sahajā*, according to him is that which coming down from the earlier births needs cultivation or training *janmasaṃskārāpekṣiṇī saḥajā*. *Āhāryā*, according to him, is one which has its source in impressions of earlier births and spells and so on, *Aupadeśikī* he explains as developing under the effect of instruction in charms, *mantratantrādyupadeśaprabhavā*.
13. *Kāvya-lāṅkāra*, 1.15.
14. *Kāvya-lāṅkāra*, 2.87.
15. Dikṣita, *Nīlakaṇṭha*, Śivalīlārṇava.
16. *Kāvya-darśa*, 1.104.
17. *Dhvanyāloka*, ed. K. Krishnamoorthy, Karnataka University, Dharwar, 1974, p. 124.
18. *Kāvya-nuśāsana*, Nirnaya Sagar Press, Bombay, 1901, pp. 4-5.
19. *Kāvya-mīmāṃsā*, Kavirahasya, Chapter 4, p. 13.
20. *Vakroktijīvitā*, 1.24.
21. *Kāvya-prakāśa*, 1.2.
22. *Abhinavabhāratī*, 1, Ma, p. 295.
23. *Kāvya-prakāśa*, Balabodhinī commentary, pp. 10-11.
24. *Sāhityadarpaṇa*, 3.2.
25. *Mālavikāgnimitra*, 2.2.
26. *Kāvya-prakāśa*, p. 163. See note.
27. *ibid.*
28. *Agnipurāṇa*, 339, 10; *Vakroktijīvitā*, 3.2; *Dhvanyāloka*, p. 250.
29. *Nāṭyaśāstra*, 7.2.
30. *Mālatīmādhava*, 1, 8.
31. *Abhijñānaśākuntala*, *Prastāvanā* (Prologue).
32. *ibid.*

What Rājaśekhara terms *vidyā* Bhāmaha had termed *kāvyaavaikhari* and had included therein the *śabda*, the correct form of words; *chandas* (the *chandovicit* of Rājaśekhara), prosody; the *abhidhānārthas* (the *abhidhānakośa* of Rājaśekhara), lexicons; the *itihāsāśrayaḥ kathāḥ*, the historical narratives as recorded in the *Rāmāyaṇa* and the *Mahābhārata* etc.; *lokaḥ*, the understanding of the nature and the situation of men and women as well as schools of philosophy such as Nyāya and Mīmāṃsā, (*Nyāyamīmāṃsādidarśanāni*) and *kalās* which Rājaśekhara includes in *Upavidyās*.

33. *Kāvyamīmāṃsā*, p. 49.

Personality of Maharṣi Vālmīki as the Rāmāyaṇa Reveals it

Maharṣi Vālmīki represents in him the best in Indian literary tradition. He is *ādikavi*, so called because of his having been the first poet of the classical period. He was also the best poet if the word *ādi* is taken to mean the best. Ānandavardhana lists him among two or three or five or six Mahākavis: *asminn ativicitra-kaviparamparāvāhini saṁsāre kālidāsaprabhṛtayo dvitrāḥ pañcaśā vā mahākavaya iti ganyante*. Even among the two ancient poets, Vālmīki and Vyāsa, it is the work of one, Vālmīki, which is termed *kāvya*, the work of the other, Vyāsa, being termed *itihāsa*. It is the work of Vālmīki which in terms of the requirements of a Mahākāvya as detailed in the texts on rhetorics answers its description in being divided into cantos, *sargabandho mahākāvyaṁ* and in having one principal sentiment, *eka eva bhaved aṅgī*, which in the opinion of some is Vīra and in the opinion of the others is Karuṇa, the former basing their opinion on the character of Rāma, the hero whose heroic deeds in their various manifestations of killing of demons in the boyhood when he had accompanied Viśvāmitra, his stoically accepting exile to keep his father true to his word given to his stepmother, his annihilating the vast array of demons in the forest and his beheading the most formidable warrior Rāvaṇa in the fiercest of the battles while the latter base their opinion on the incident of the killing of the male Krauñca bird by a hunter which had so upset Vālmīki as to make him pronounce a curse in a metre hitherto unknown, the metre called Anuṣṭubh or śloka, *śokaḥ ślokatvam āgataḥ* and the entire theme of the work which is dotted with events most sad and pathetic.

Keynote Address at the International Conference on "Maharshi Vālmīki", Central Vālmīki Sabha, U.K. and Aston University, Birmingham, April 10, 2005. Chair : Shri F.C. Sohota, President of the Sabha.

Maḥarṣi Vālmīki's work, the *Rāmāyaṇa*, is unique in certain respects. It is one of those few works of Sanskrit literature where the author himself is one of its characters. He is the central figure in some of its events. It is he who gives shelter to Sītā in exile and accomodates her among the hermit women staying not far from his Āśrama, leaving the word with them to treat her well. It is there that she gives birth to twins Lava and Kuśa. When Rāma declares Aśvamedha he comes to attend it along with his pupils who include among them the young sons of Sītā who under his instructions go about singing the *Rāmāyaṇa* everywhere, in the Āśramas of the Ṛṣis, in the Brahmin localities, in streets and thoroughfares of Ayodhyā, in front of its royal palace. It is the plan that he lays for the king to catch sight of the young ones for the ultimate aim of bringing Sītā in Ayodhyā.

There are various theories about Vālmīki as to what kind of a person he was. More reliable it would be to look to his work and draw a picture of him on the basis of the information, however, meagre and sketchy, it furnishes about him, a source not fully exploited so far in spite of voluminous studies carried out on the *Rāmāyaṇa*. The name Vālmīki that he came to acquire through the ant-hill come up round him—*valmīka* means anthill—through practice of penance for long years in the same posture gets corroboration from his own statement in the *Rāmāyaṇa* where he says that he has practised penance for many thousands of years:

bahuvarṣasahasrāṇi tapaścaryā mayā kṛtā² ।

It is this *tapaścaryā* that had invested him with supernatural power, termed *dharmasamādhi* in the *Rāmāyaṇa*. It is through this that he had come to know that Sītā was coming to the forest and the cause of her coming:

*āyāntī cāsi vijñātā mayā dharmasamādhinā ।
kāraṇam caiva sarvaṁ me hṛdayenopalakṣitam ।³*

He makes further reference to this power, the divine vision, acquired through penance which had enabled him to know that she was faultless:

apāpāṁ vedmi sīte te tapolabdhena cakṣuṣā⁴ ।

This spiritual power had invested him with the capacity to know all that goes on in the universe:

*sarvaṃ ca viditaṃ mahyaṃ trailokye yad dhi vartate*⁵ ।

Vālmiki was one of the kindest of the ṛṣis of ancient India. Any suffering anywhere would disturb him and shake him to his roots. That is why when he saw the female of the Krauñca couple crying at the loss of her mate in love-making, felled by an arrow of a hunter, he felt so upset as to lose self-control and pronounce a curse on the hunter to lose respect in society till eternity. So overtaken was he with the grief that he did not know as to what he had uttered. After a while, when he had collected himself, he had mulled:

*kim idaṃ vyāhṛtaṃ mayā*⁶ ।

He is the one sage among the galaxy of them in ancient India who would stake everything of him for the sake of others. When he produced Sītā to prove her fidelity at the instance of Rāma during the Aśvamedha sacrifice, he vouched for her purity in words which have few parallels. "Let me lose all merit gained through practice of penance for thousands of years if Sītā were impure", asserted he:

bahuvarṣasahasrāṇi tapaścaryā mayā kṛtā

*nopāśnīyāṃ phalaṃ tasyā duṣṭeyaṃ yadi maithilī*⁷

The tenth son of Pracetas, he had never told a lie. On that basis he assures Rāma that the twins are his sons. He has never committed a sin any time mentally, physically or verbally. With all this purity of his he testifies to the purity of Sītā. How many sages or seers there could be who would be prepared to renounce for the sake of some one else that which is so dear to them and for acquiring which they had striven so hard.

When Sītā's presence is reported to him by hermit lads, he himself goes out to meet her and consoles her. He is the friend of her father-in-law Daśaratha. That is all the more reason for him to take care of her. So solicitous is he of her well-being that he asks the hermit women with whom she is to stay to be considerate to her out of deference to him.

From the description in the *Rāmāyaṇa* it is clear that the women's quarters were not far, *avidūre*⁸ from the Āśrama of Vālmiki. He would be visiting them only once a while for it is said

that the women expressed their happiness, *mudā yuktāḥ*⁹ to him for his visit to them after a long time:

svāgataṁ te muniśreṣṭha cirasyāgamanam ca te ¹⁰

Vālmīki's work, it is to be noted, was not only a poem but a song. It had to be rendered in music. After he had composed it, he set about thinking as to how it could be presented in public. As he was absorbed in his thoughts, Lava and Kuśa happened to come to him. He immediately concluded that they could suit the task, endowed as they were with a good voice and good looks and were capable of appreciating poetry. He taught them to interpret the Vedas and along with that the whole of the *Rāmāyaṇa*. The young ones learnt it by heart with all the involutions of tone, melody, measure and time suggestive of various emotions. They sang it in an assembly of hermits sending them into ecstasy and rapture to the point of presenting to them as gifts whatever meagre possessions they had. It is only after the efficacy of the song and of those rendering it had been successfully put to test that the great composer asked them to present it in the city of Ayodhyā with all the experts in different lores present in it for the most momentous occasion of the horse sacrifice. It was not just a gathering of hermits there, but a gathering of connoisseurs. Even in normal circumstances the urban people are considered keener judge of the quality of the art than the sylvan ones. In their appreciation lay the success of Vālmīki's attempt. His song had to catch their attention and that of the ruler of the kingdom whose life story it was, a story a part of which he was unaware himself. Had his work been just a poem to be recited by some plain-looking bard, it would not have aroused the interest that it did in the ruler who found time to listen to it even in the midst of his busy schedule of the horse-sacrifice which left only the intervals to him, he utilizing even these to regale himself with the ear-catching presentations in sweet voice (in typical musical setting) by the young lads, that being the much-needed diversion for him. It would be doing injustice to Vālmīki to describe him as only a poet. He was also a musicologist of a high order and an expert music director which is amply borne out by the elaborate instructions he gives to the sons of Sītā for singing his *Rāmāyaṇa*. They should tune the *Vīṇā* sweetly, he tells them, and establish the mode they wish to play by

suitably manipulating the frets. The vocalists to be effective, must have to have good voice, sweet and pleasant. Vālmiki is acutely conscious of it. That is why he prescribes a diet of a variety of fruits grown on the mountains for the young lads. This would not affect their voice says he, nor would they feel exhaustion, the diet of fruits being rather light, particularly when they are enjoined to sing twenty cantos of the work every day and those too at different places which would entail a lot of movement on their part. He also enjoins upon the young ones to sing with glad hearts and attentive minds. The instructions reveal very clearly Vālmiki's conception of a good singer and what goes to make him so. A sweet voice, a happy and attentive mind and a well-tuned instrument are the *sine qua non* for a vocalist to produce the desired effect. No wonder then that the great work rendered in music and song under the instructions of the composer thrilled everybody from the king down to the common man.

Though a sage, living in an Āśrama away from the din and turmoil of the city, Vālmiki was quite worldly wise reminding one of the observation of Śārngarava about Kaṇva which is as true in his case as it was in the case of that sage that there is nothing which is beyond the ken of the wise: *na khalu dhūmatām kaścīd aviṣayo nāma*¹¹ at his (Kaṇva's) statement: *vanaukaso 'pi laukikajñā vāyam*,¹² even though we dwell in the forest we know the ways of the world. Vālmiki tells Lava and Kuśa to go about singing in Ayodhyā everywhere, in every nook and corner. His idea was that their song should reach the ears of the king. His ultimate aim was to bring Rāma and Sītā together. And this aim he was trying to achieve through their offsprings. Vālmiki's plan was to be slow and steady in the achievement of his aim. The young ones were not to disclose their identity straightaway. Their song catching the ears of the king and he getting impressed with it, he was likely to enquire of them as to whose children they were. They were to sidetrack the query and tell him that they were the disciples of Vālmiki. If the king were to offer them some reward, in the form of gold or some such thing, they should decline it on the plea of the anchorites living on fruits and roots having no use for it. The whole thing worked as per his (Vālmiki's) plan. In devising this plan Vālmiki was guided in all probability by two considerations. One, the knowledge at the

outset of the young boys being his sons born of Sītā whom he had discarded would have produced an altogether different reaction in Rāma and in the large congregation of people listening to them. From their appearance and bearing the people should conclude themselves their connection with Rāma. And this is what they did. To them they appeared to be the spirit and the image of Rāma: *bimbād bimbam ivoddhṛtau*.¹³ If they were not to be distinguished by their matted hair and their bark attire, it was impossible to say which was Rāma and which were the singers:

*jaṭilau yadi na syātām na valkaladharau yadi ।
viśeṣam nādhigacchāmo gāyato rāghavasya ca ॥*¹⁴

Now, this was a very subtle way of gauging the public acceptability of Sītā, the ultimate objective of Vālmīki. After all, it was out of public censure of Sītā's purity that she had been banished. If the sons that she gave birth to, were so like their father as to be nondistinguishable from him, well, that should be a proof good enough for Sītā having had no physical contact with any one other than her husband. Direct approach in this could have been much less productive than the indirect one adopted by Vālmīki. The identity of the young singers was to be disclosed with the description of their birth through a text, to be sung for days on end with the possibility of the public opposition to Sītā's purity getting softened to a considerable extent. The plan of the young ones declining the offer of costly gifts would have been designed to arouse the curiosity, the *kautūhala* of the king and the others in the congregation which led the king to enquire of the young ones the extent of the Kāvya and the whereabouts of the composer of the same, the great sage, who they said was camping close to the sacrificial site. The sage staying nearby, it was easy for Rāma to call for him along with Sītā when the singing of the text had reached the most crucial stage of her banishment. As per the plan of Rāma, Sītā was only to pledge her purity in the assembly of the ṛṣis and other important people just to take away the stigma from him:

*śvaḥ prabhāte tu śapatham maithilī janakātmajā ।
karotu pariṣanmadhye śodhanārtham mamaiva ca ॥*¹⁵

What happened thereafter is all too well-known. Sītā took the pledge but it was not an ordinary kind of pledge. It was a pledge for her

disappearance in the Mother Earth from whom she had been born leaving distraught Rāma behind to bewail his lot.

The story did not end there. Endowed with the divine vision that he was, the mighty sage, termed on more counts than one as *bhagavān*: *Vālmīkir bhagavān ṛṣiḥ*¹⁶ carried it further to cover even the events yet to take place.

The *Rāmāyaṇa* is not just a poem, it is, as has been pointed out a number of times above, a song, a song of the human heart with all its joys and sorrows, with all its pleasures and pain.

An incident in the *Rāmāyaṇa* reveals an aspect of Vālmīki's personality which deserves better notice. It is strange that Vālmīki did not come to attend the horse-sacrifice at the invitation of Rāma unlike other sages like Vasiṣṭha, Vāmadeva and Jābāli and a number of other people versed in all sorts of disciplines. This appears all the more strange in view of the fact that when it was the question of forsaking Sītā, she was dropped near the Āśrama of Vālmīki, he being a great friend of Rāma's father:

*rājño daśarathasyaiva pitur me munipuṅgavaḥ ।
sakhā paramako vipro vālmīkiḥ sumahāyaśāḥ ॥*¹⁷

The same Vālmīki was totally forgotten by Rāma for his great Aśvamedha sacrifice. But invited or not, Vālmīki decided to come for the sacrifice, he being the kind of sage not to stand on prestige. Not only did he come, *ājagāma*, on his own, to the sacrifice that had been in progress for more than a year, *saṁvatsaram atho sāgram*¹⁸, he made his own arrangements for board and lodging. He had a number of pleasant huts put up at a lonely place not far from the camping ground of huts of the other sages. His disciples had brought and placed near them many cart loads of excellent roots and fruits. So quietly he had come to Ayodhyā that Rāma did not even know of his presence there. When Lava and Kuśa told him that it was Vālmīki who was the author of the great poem: *kartā kāvyasya mahataḥ*,¹⁹ he asked them as to where he was: *kva cāsau munipuṅgavaḥ*²⁰. To this the youngsters had replied that he had come to the sacrifice : *Vālmīkir bhagavān kartā samprāpto yajñasaṁvidham*.²¹

The sacrifice being in progress, he thought it was good for him to attend it. A lesser mortal would have thought otherwise but not a

sage of the calibre of Vālmiki. It was a religious activity which was on and he could well join it. And then it was an opportunity for him to achieve his self-imposed mission of vindicating the honour of Sītā who had been wronged, which a supremely compassionate sage, *paramodāro muniḥ*²² like him could hardly bear. He not only had laid out a plan for it but also saw to it that it was executed properly. Vālmiki had no rancour for Rāma or grouse against him neither for not inviting him nor for forsaking Sītā which was out of public censure and not out of any genuine feeling of doubt about her chastity. He had great regard for monarchy. He specially instructs the young singers to show no disrespect to the king who he says is in a way father to all: *pitā hi sarvabhūtānām rājā bhavati dharmataḥ*²³.

The study of the *Rāmāyaṇa* reveals Vālmiki to have been a unique personality in more ways than one. Given to practising penance for long years in sylvan solitude, he had not been remiss in cultivating friendship with the high and mighty of his time, his friendship with King Daśaratha being a case in point. His austere life had not taken a bit from his rich storehouse of compassion for living beings, exemplified *par excellence* by his owning of Sītā, a hapless lady forsaken even by her husband, as also his cursing of the hunter who had shot down the male of the Krauñca couple in the midst of the act of love-making. Vālmiki combined in him the twin qualities of a poet and a musician culminating in his immortal classic the *Rāmāyaṇa* and the singing of it in the typical musical setting by the young sons of Sītā under his instruction. A sage, he had the sagacity to lay a plan and execute it successfully for bringing Sītā to Rāma with the aim of uniting the two. He was self-abnegating to the extent of putting on stake all his merit earned by hard austerities for a person who he firmly believed had been wronged. Vālmiki was an ascetic with all the wordly wisdom, a composer and a musicologist and above all, a very kind-hearted person. No wonder then that he has won rich encomia from countless millions all through the ages.

References

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2. *Vālmiki Rāmāyaṇa*, VIII. 96.19.

3. *ibid.*, VII. 49.8.
4. *ibid.*, VII. 49.10.
5. *ibid.*, VII. 49.9.
6. *ibid.*, I. 13.16.
7. *ibid.*, VII. 96.19.
8. *ibid.*, VII. 49.11.
9. *ibid.*, VII. 49.14.
10. *ibid.*, VII. 49.15.
11. *Abhijñānaśākunala*, Act. IV.
12. *ibid.*
13. *Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa*, VII. 94.13.
14. *ibid.*, VII. 94.14.
15. *ibid.*, VII. 95.6.
16. *ibid.*, VII. 93.1.
17. *ibid.*, VII. 47.16-17.
18. *ibid.*, VII. 92.19.
19. *ibid.*, VII. 94.23
20. *ibid.*, VII. 94.24.
21. *ibid.*
22. *ibid.*, VII. 93.16.
23. *ibid.*, VII. 93.14.

Modern Sanskrit Poetry

Poetry has been with India from the times of the Vedas. Simply its character has been undergoing change from time to time. From the religious poetry of the Vedas it turned into a simple narrative poetry of the *Rāmāyaṇa*, the *Mahābhārata* and the Purāṇas, from the narrative poetry of the *Rāmāyaṇa*, the *Mahābhārata* and the Purāṇas it switched over to the highly sophisticated and ornate poetry of the Mahākāvya. The same happened with subject matter as well. It was court poetry in the epics, devotional poetry in the stotras, eulogistic poetry in the praśastis and gnomic and didactic poetry in the Nītikāvya and the subhāṣitas. From depicting generally the lives of the kings and their exploits in the epics in the ancient and the medieval periods, it came to mirror more in the modern Kāvya the life of the common people and record the contemporary events and the lives of the personalities accounting for them. The number of Kāvya of all types, the Mahākāvya, the Khaṇḍakāvya, the Prabandhakāvya and the Muktaśloka compares very favourably with that in any other language, Indian and foreign.

Exposure to a new world does exercise its influence on the people. Sanskrit literature could be no exception to it. Even in this tradition-bound literature new ideas crept in, new metres appeared, free and blank verse sprouted forth. We may illustrate this with a few examples. In two major works produced in the early part of the last century, the *Sāhityavaibhava*¹ and the *Jayapuravaibhava*², their author the late Bhatta Mathura Nath Shastri employs many Hindi metres, Doha, Soratha, Chaupai, Alha and so on and also tries his hand at the Urdu metres like Bahare Hazaz Mussaddas Mahzuf, Bahare Raman Musamman Mahzuf and so on. Many Sanskrit periodicals at present carry poems in the form of Quawwalis and

Keynote Address at the 90th Anniversary of the Madras Sanskrit College, Madras, April 7, 1998. Chair : Hon'ble Shri Venkatesh Chari, Chief Justice of India.

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Gazals called in Sanskrit form by their composers on the basis of sound analogy Kākalikā and Kajjalikā respectively. Quite a few of the modern Sanskrit poets have modelled their poems on film songs and set them to popular tunes. As a case in point may be mentioned the collection of songs, the *Abhinavarāgagovinda*³ of Shiv Prasad Bhardwaj. Free verse unknown in old Sanskrit is common enough in modern one. Some of the more bold ones among the present-day Sanskritists have started composing on what is known in Hindi as Akavitā, Non-poetry.

Some western critics have deplored the lack of historical sense in India. Though there is a good number of works in Sanskrit which deal with different rulers and their dynasties particularly in the medieval period, they are more narrative than factual history, with everything, history, legend, myth and poetry mixed up in them. With excellent poetry, they could no doubt, pass off as nice Kāvya, they being styled by critics as historical Kāvya with their historical setting. The nearest approach to a good historical work is the *Rājatarāngiṇī* of Kalhaṇa. This deficiency of good historical works presenting faithful accounts of men and events and still retaining their poetical character is more than made up by some of the modern works like the *Bhāratānuvarṇana*⁴ of T. Ganapati Sastri, the *Bhāratīyam Itivṛttam*⁵ of Ramavatar Sharma and the *Bhāratetiḥāsa*⁶ of Indra Vidyavachaspati. The history of the independence movement in India finds a detailed treatment at the hands of Rewa Prasad Dwivedi in his *Svātantrya-sambhava*⁷, a Mahākāya in 28 cantos. On certain specific periods of the history of India we have some good works like the *Śryaṅkakāvya*⁸ of Kavi Krishna Kaur Mishra which in its sixteen cantos gives a detailed history of the Sikh period. The *Sikhagurucarita*⁹ and the *Sikhagurusiddhānta-pārijāta*¹⁰ respectively of Raghunath Lakshman Upasani and Har Singh Sadhu describe in detail the life and teachings of Sikh Gurus, throwing in between considerable light on the history of the Sikh period. The *Jayapurarājavamsāvali*¹¹ of Ram Nath Nand gives a comprehensive account of the Jaipur rulers. So does give the *Cālukyacarita*¹² of Lakshmi Narasimha Swami of the Chalukya kings. The *Jhāṇsīvarīcarita*¹³ of Subodh Chandra Pant gives the life history of Maharani Lakshmibai of Jhansi. The

*Raktāktahimālaya*¹⁴, a Mahākāvya in twenty-one Śikharas by Parameshwar Datt Tripathi describes the Chinese invasion on India and the *Bāṅglādeśaḥ*¹⁵, a Khaṇḍakāvya in 208 stanzas traces the history in brief of the formation of Bangladesh. The *Rājataranginī* of Kalhaṇa which had been brought uptodate twice in the post-Kalhaṇa period is brought further uptodate by Govind Rajanaka in the form of a Mahākāvya published serially in the *Śrīh*, a Sanskrit magazine that had been appearing from Srinagar.

With the start of the freedom struggle and with the appearance on Indian horizon of important national leaders, Sanskrit writers got a new theme to work upon: To describe the life and work of leaders like Mahatma Gandhi, Bal Gangadhar Tilak, Jawaharlal Nehru, Vinayak Damodar Savarkar, Subhash Chandra Bose, Indira Gandhi and so on. Of these Mahatma Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru attracted the maximum attention because of their towering personalities. The credit for composing the first work on Mahatma Gandhi in Sanskrit¹⁶—it is in prose incidentally—goes to Charu Deva Shastri, the father of the writer of these lines. He was followed by a number of others like Sadhu Sharan Mishra who composed his nineteen-canto Mahākāvya under the title *Śrīgāndhīcarita*,¹⁷ Shiva Govind Tripathi who wrote his eight-canto Mahākāvya under the title *Śrīgāndhīgaurava*¹⁸, Vidyanidhi, only two cantos of his planned Mahākāvya *Śrīgāndhīcaritāmṛta*¹⁹ have so far seen the light of the day, Brahmanand Shukla and Ramesh Chandra Shukla who wrote their Khaṇḍakāvyas in 111 and 125 stanzas under the titles *Śrīgāndhīcarita*²⁰ and *Gāndhīgaurava*²¹ respectively and S.N. Tadpatrikar who wrote his twenty-four Adhyāya *Gāndhīgītā*²² in the age-old *Gītā* style. Selected sayings of Mahatma Gandhi were compiled and translated in Sanskrit verse by C.D. Deshmukh in his *Gāndhīsūktimuktāvalī*²³. The latest in the works on Mahatma Gandhi is the *Mahātmāyana*, the title coined on the analogy of the *Rāmāyaṇa*, in fourteen Adhyāyas by Kavi Kedara.

Nehru's life was described by a number of poets: by Jaya Ram Shastri in his *Javāharavasantasāmrajya*²⁴, a Kāvya in seven cantos and the *Śrīmadgāndhībāndhava*²⁵, a Mahākāvya in twenty-one cantos, by Brahmanand Shukla in his *Śrīnehrū-carita*²⁶, a Mahākāvya in eighteen cantos, by Balabhadra Prasad Shastri in his

*Nehrūyaśaḥsaurabha*²⁷, a Mahākāvya in twelve cantos and by S.B. Warnekar in his *Javāharacintana*²⁸, a collection of poems dealing with the thoughts and ideas of Jawaharlal Nehru.

The autobiography of Jawaharlal Nehru was translated in Sanskrit verse under the title *Nehrūcaritamahākāvya*²⁹ in seventy-one cantos by Amir Chandra Shastri which is the biggest work so far in poetic translation in Sanskrit.

Besides these big works a number of smaller poems were also composed on the great leader, full details of which can be had from the study *Sanskrit Vāṇmāya meṇ Nehru*³⁰, Nehru in Sanskrit Literature by Madhu Bala. On the life of Bal Gangadhar Tilak has appeared a three-volume Mahākāvya, the *Tilakayaśorṇava*³¹ by the veteran of the freedom struggle M.S. Aney which won him the posthumous Sahitya Akademi Award. On Subhash Chandra Bose of the Indian National Army fame has appeared a Mahākāvya, *Śrīsubhāṣacarita*³² by V.K. Chatre. The latest in the list of the Sanskrit Mahākāvyas on the leaders of the freedom struggle is the voluminous *Vaināyaka*,³³ an account of the inimitable saga of unmitigated suffering, pain and hardship of Veer Savarkar by G.B. Palsule. Collectively on seven prominent personalities of India, religious, social and political, has appeared a work, the *Bhāratarāṣṭratna*³⁴ by Yajneshwar Sharma Shastri. On Mrs. Indira Gandhi, the former Prime Minister of India at least four Kāvyas have appeared of late three of which the *Indirāvijayaprasastiśataka*³⁵ by Hazari Lal Shastri of Rohtak, the *Indirākīrtiśataka*³⁶ by Srikrishna Semwal of Delhi and the *Indirāprasastiśataka*³⁷ by Shanti Rathi, the Ex-Minister of State of Education, Govt. of Haryana are of the Śataka variety while the fourth one, the *Indirāgandhīcarita*³⁸ by the writer of these lines is a Mahākāvya in twenty-five cantos.

It was but natural that along with the life of Mahatma Gandhi the movement started by him should also receive an appreciative notice of modern Sanskrit writers. The works of Kshama Rao, the *Satyāgrahagītā*³⁹ and the *Uttarasatyāgrahagītā*,⁴⁰ the *Satyāgrahanītikāvya*⁴¹ of Satya Deva Vasishtha and the *Gāndhīsūktimuktāvalī*⁴² of C.D. Deshmukh deserve mention in this connection.

Some of the reform movements in India and the personalities behind them have become the subject matter of some of the modern

Kāvya giving a new dimension to them. Of these Swami Dayanand, the founder of the Arya Samaj and Swami Vivekananda, the English educated missionary steal the light. There are two Mahākāvya on the former, the *Dayānanda-digvijaya*, obviously under the inspiration of the *Śaṅkara-digvijaya* of old, each of Akhilanand Sharma⁴³ and Medhāvratācārya and the *Municaritāmṛta*⁴⁴ of Dilip Datt Sharma and two small kāvyas in 63 and 52 stanzas each called *Dayānanda-lahari*⁴⁵ by Akhilanand Sharma and Medhāvratācārya⁴⁶ respectively in the Laharī-Kāvya style of old. Besides, there appeared in 1952 from Allahabad a Mahākāvya, the *Āryodayakāvya*⁴⁷ in twenty-one cantos by Ganga Prasad Upadhyaya describing graphically the historic setting at the time of the appearance of Dayanand, the Hindu decadence and revival, the foreign domination of India and the attainment of independence. On Swami Vivekananda who is subject matter of many a work in Sanskrit in prose and drama form there has appeared only one work in Mahākāvya form, the *Svāmivivekānandacarita*⁴⁸ by Tryambak A. Bhandarkar which describes the stupendous work done by the Swami for the spread of the message of Hinduism in countries far and near. The teachings of Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa, the spiritual teacher of Vivekananda, numbering a thousand, were compiled in poetic form under the title *Śrīśrīrāmakṛṣṇopadeśasāhasrī*,⁴⁹ in eighteen Adhyāyas by the same Bhandarkar.

The discovery by the West of the glorious literary and the cultural heritage of India had its impact on the people of India itself who were awakened to a new realization of their past greatness. The heroes of old who could offer resistance to foreign invaders were picked up for glorification. By foreign what was meant was not always the British but even the Muslims who sought to establish their rule in India and fulfil their ambition by annexing territories. Rana Pratap Singh and Chatrapati Shivaji were two of the many great heroes of the past who had withstood the all-powerful Mughals and thereby carved out a rare niche for themselves in Indian annals. Sanskrit writers in their patriotic fervour sang their saga of heroism and sacrifice. Mahākāvya and plays were written on them describing their life and work to the minutest details. Rana Pratap is the subject matter of a Mahākāvya, the *Rāṇāyanīya*⁵⁰, of Ogeti Parikshit Sarma and Chatrapati Shivaji of the two of them, the

*Śivarājyodaya*⁵¹ of Warnekar and the *Kṣatrapaticarita*⁵² of Uma Shankar Sharma Tripathi.

The epics and the Purāṇas have continued to provide themes to modern Sanskrit poets as they have done to poets of the ancient and the medieval periods. A couple of more noteworthy of them in this category are the *Gaṇapatisambhava*⁵³ of Prabhu Datt Shastri, the *Sītācarita*⁵⁴ of Rewa Prasad Dwivedi, the *Jānakījīvana*⁵⁵ of Abhiraja Rajendra Mishra, *Vaidehīcarita*⁵⁶ of Ram Chandra Mishra and the *Bhīṣmacarita*⁵⁷ of Hari Narayan Dikshit.

While dealing with the old themes modern Sanskrit writers have not unoften introduced innovations in them. In the *Jānakījīvana* the poet has given a new turn to the character of Sītā in that he drops the episode of her exile. The washerman's charge is examined in an open assembly with Vasiṣṭha upholding the divinity of Rāma and Sītā making the washerman realize his guilt and beg for forgiveness.

In the same category of works with old themes with an innovative touch falls the *Ūrmīliyamahākāvya*⁵⁸ of Narayana Shukla which picks up the little known Rāmāyaṇic character Ūrmilā, the wife of Lakṣmaṇa as the principal character wherein he is in good company with Raṣṭrakavi Maithilisharan Gupta who had done precisely the same in his *Sāketa*. In the *Ūrmīliyamahākāvya* it is Ūrmilā who is the real daughter of Janaka, Sītā being discovered by him from a jar, an incident remarkably similar to the Thai *Ramakien*, the Thai *Rāmāyaṇa*, dug up at the fringes of the kingdom under the orders of Rāvaṇa when the kingdom was struck with a terrible famine. The work is remarkable in the spirited dialogues between Sumitrā and Lakṣmaṇa and Ūrmilā and Lakṣmaṇa. The ladies readily approve of Lakṣmaṇa accompanying his brother to the forest. Another notable work in the above category is the *Sītārāvaṇasamvādajharī*⁵⁹, the dialogue between Rāvaṇa and Sītā, the former proposing to her and the latter administering him a stern rebuff, by Rama Shastri and Sita Ram Shastri, the Āsthānapaṇḍitas of Mysore. The work, a Śataka, is peculiar in that it is composed in the form of *Prahelikā*.

The innovative spirit is noticeable in not only introducing changes in the old themes but also taking for delineation an altogether different version of it. The writer of these lines has composed a twenty-five canto Mahākāvya the *Śrīrāmakīrtima-*

*hākāvya*⁶⁰ on the Thai version, known locally by the name of *Ramakien*, of the Rāma story which incidentally is the first Sanskrit Mahākāvya on any of the versions of the Rāma story outside of India.

Free verse (non-metrical composition) in Sanskrit literature is the gift of the 20th century, prompting a sizeable number of Sanskrit poets to take to it. Some of the more prominent of such poets are Ram Karan Sharma, Krishna Lal, Om Prakash Thakur, Keshab Chandra Dash, Dev Datt Bhatti, Pushpa Trivedi, Nalini Shukla, and Harsh Dev Madhav, the last one being notable for his bold experimentalism in Sanskrit poetry in introducing Baul songs of Bengal in Sanskrit poetry and in composing his poems in foreign literary forms like Sojo, Tanka and Haiku in addition to writing Gazels. He has gone so far as to write in the style of graphs, maps and pictures. So far eight of his collections of poems have appeared in print.

The tradition of light verse and satire has been with Sanskrit literature for quite some time past, verses on mosquito or bug being found and their being equated with the wicked people in their misdeeds. What has happened in the modern period is that their number and scope has increased. Even such things as addiction to tea and coffee are under attack now. Two of the works by M.V. Sampat Kumar, the *Kāphīpānīya*⁶¹ and the *Kāphītyāgadvādaśamañjarikā*⁶² are really hard on this beverage, though it has its defender in Ataraja (V. Swaminath Sarma) who extols it in his *Kāphīṣoḍaśikā*⁶³, same things that Sahasrabuddhe does in the case of tea in his *Chāhagītā*.⁶⁴ In his *Kapīnām Upavāsaḥ*⁶⁵ (Fast of the Monkeys) D.T. Tatacharya has a dig at people who pretend austerities. Punnasari Nilakantha Sarma derides in his *Sāttvikasvapna*⁶⁶ the shouting of differing slogans and ideologies by Parties in the guise of a conference of a bull, a monkey, a fox, a parrot and so on. In the *Tuḍesmr̥ti*⁶⁷ Shastrarthamaharathi Madhavacharya satirizes with many English words thrown in his otherwise impeccable Sanskrit the life-style of the so-called ultra-modern Indians who have started blindly aping the west.

There is a change now from the time a stray witty or satirical poem appeared in a Sanskrit magazine. There are big collections of them available now answering every kind of light verse, parody, wit

and satire. An example of parody par excellence is the *Kavyāmṛtadhārā*⁶⁸ of Gurudayalu Shastri and that of wit is the *Kaṇṭakārjuna*⁶⁹ of Arjun Wadekar. The *Tuḍesmṛti* referred to above is an instance of parody and satire both. In satirical writing two names emerge prominently, that of Vagisa Shastri and Prashasya Mitra Shastri, the former the author of the *Narmasaptasāli*⁷⁰ and the latter the author of four works, the *Samskṛtavyaṅgyavilāsa*⁷¹, the *Hāsavilāsa*⁷², the *Komalakaṇṭakāvali*⁷³ and the *Narmadā*.⁷⁴ The satires of both the Shastris, are hard-hitting in attacking the social evils.

Now a word about travelogue. It has been with Sanskrit literature for long figuring generally in the context of pilgrimage, the places visited being generally those in India. In the modern period, however, it has extended its scope to places of historical, cultural and tourist interest not only in India but also abroad though their number is extremely limited. A growing form of writing, it has added to it such works as the *Nyaktarajanapadaśobhā*⁷⁵ on Holland (Nyaktarajanapada being the literal translation of the Netherlands) by B.Ch. Chabra, a poem on Persepolis⁷⁶ by C. Kunhan Raja, the *Śarmanyadeśaḥ sutarām vibhāti*⁷⁷ and the *Thaideśavilāsa*⁷⁸ on Germany and Thailand respectively by the writer of the present lines who incidentally is working at present on the latest of his Mahākāvya, the *Viśvamahākāvya* in several volumes describing the large number of countries and places visited by him over the years.

Though letter-writing in Sanskrit is not uncommon among present-day Sanskritists, there is only one collection of them in verse available at present. This collection, called the *Patrakāvya*⁷⁹ is by the writer of these lines. With its one hundred and twenty four letters with a total of 2222 stanzas it introduces a new genre in Sanskrit poetry.

Elegy, the little practised form in old Sanskrit has found expression in a couple of notable works in modern Sanskrit like the *Smṛtitarāṅga*⁸⁰ of T.G. Mainkar where the author bemoans the supposed loss of his wife, the *Virahalaharī*⁸¹ of S.B. Velankar wherein the author describes in twenty-five songs with indication of Rāgas and Tālas the image of one who has lost his beloved and is consequently suffering from pangs of separation from her, the five *Vilāpakāvya*s, collectively called the *Vilāpapañcika*⁸² of Deepak

Ghosh bemoaning the present condition of the Sanskrit language, a lament of a poor man for his miserable life in rainy season, the bemoaning of a cloud in having to carry the message of an unknown person to a far away city and so on, the *Rādhikāvilāpa*⁸³ and the *Virahiṇī Vrajāṅganā*⁸⁴ of Shiva Varan Shukla and Gaura Krishna Goswami respectively depicting the pathetic condition of Rādhā in separation from Kṛṣṇa on his having migrated to Mathurā.

It is impossible to give a complete, nay even a comprehensive survey of modern Sanskrit poetic works. Running into hundreds of titles it is enriched by some of the best brains of the country. The attempt here has been to draw attention to its richness and variety enlivened by new trends and tendencies setting in it which makes it one of the most delightful of the world literatures.

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Subhāṣitas in the Purāṇas: A Cultural Perspective

Subhāṣitas, or good sayings, are a characteristic feature of Sanskrit literature. They propound a fundamental truth, point towards the reality of the situation obtaining in this world of contradictions and contrarities and draw attention to what is right and what is wrong, what one should or should not do, how one should or should not conduct oneself in life. In the texts on *nīti*, they make direct appearance but in other texts they flow out of the narrative either as illustrations or deductions. It is in the last form that they appear in the bulk of the Sanskrit literature including the vast corpus of the Purāṇic one. To point to what is right or wrong, what is acceptable or not, depends upon the values of a particular cultural milieu. The Purāṇas, having their origin in India, were obviously reflecting the Indian cultural milieu. When the Purāṇas are to be examined from the cultural perspective, it should mean on the face of it the Indian cultural perspective.

This brings us to the question as to what this Indian culture is. If it can be summarised in one sentence, it is the inculcation of *dharma*, the all-encompassing concept. It is this which sustains society: *dharmo dhārayate prajāḥ*.¹ The essence of this *dharma* is not to do unto others what one would not like to be done to oneself: *ātmanah pratikūlāni pareṣaṃ na samācaret*.² This is the *dharma-sarvasva*. This can be achieved by following certain principles which the sage Manu has prescribed for all the four castes:

*ahiṃsā satyam asteyaṃ śaucam indriya-nigrahaḥ |
etaṃ sāmāsikam dharmam cāturvarṇye 'bravīn manuḥ* ॥³

Opening Address at the International Conference on "Sanskrit and Related Studies", University of Warsaw, Warsaw, October 7, 1999.
Chair : Prof. Krzysztof Byrsky, Director, Institute of Indology at the University. Guest of Honour : His Excellency Shri Nalin Surie, Ambassador of India in Poland.

The Purāṇas lay emphasis on each one of these. According to the *Līṅga-purāṇa*, *ahimsā* is to devote oneself to the well-being of all the beings as they are one's very being. It is this which leads to the realization of one's own self:

ātmaivat sarva-bhūtānām hitāyāiva pravartanam |
*ahimsāiṣā samākhyātā yā cātma-jñāna-siddhidā ||*⁵

There is emphasis on *ahimsā* in the *Brahmāṇḍa-purāṇa* to the extent that it is proclaimed as the gateway to *dharma*:

*ahimsā dharmasya dvāram uktam maharṣibhiḥ ||*⁶

The *Padma-purāṇa* assigns higher regions to the followers of this principle and the lower ones to those who do not do so:

ahimsānirmalam dharmam sevante ye vipaścitaḥ |
*teṣāṃ evorddhva-gamanam yānti tiryag adho 'nyathā ||*⁶

Satya, or truth, according to the *Līṅga-purāṇa* is speaking out exactly what has been seen, heard, imagined or experienced by oneself in a manner that it does not cause pain to others:

drṣṭam śrutam cānumitam svānubhūtam yathārthataḥ |
*kathanam satyam ity uktam para-pīḍā-vivarjitam ||*⁷

It is worthwhile to pause here and ponder over the implication of the last part of the explanation of *satya* which is to avoid *para-pīḍā*, pain or anguish to others. To reproduce exactly *yathārthataḥ*, what one has seen, heard, etc., is truth, no doubt, but not the whole truth. The more important thing about it is that it must not cause harm or unpleasantness to the listener. This is what is the import of the well-known adage: *satyam brūyāt priyam brūyāt, na brūyāt satyam apriyam*⁸. The *Viṣṇu-purāṇa* also says the same thing. Not only that. It goes a step further. It enjoins silence if the truth were to cause hurt to others:

tasmāt satyam vadet prājño yat para-prīti-kāraṇam |
*satyam yat para-duḥkhāya tadā mauna-paro bhavet ||*⁹

The *Purāṇa* offers this injunction in view of the possibility of such occurrences where the truth may lead to violence or injury to others. According to the *Lāṭa-saṃhitā*, on such occasions truth would turn into untruth and vice versa:

satyam apy asatyatām yāti kvacid dhimsānubandhataḥ |
*asatyam satyatām yāti kvaci jñasya rakṣaṇāt ||*¹⁰

“Do the Brahmins get (really) purified by bathing in water every time? So one should carry out internal purification as per the proper procedure.”

Indriya-nigraha is control over the senses, a recurring theme of many a Sanskrit work, including the *Purāṇas*. The *Śrīmad-bhāgavata-purāṇa* recognises the inexorability of the attraction of the senses which it terms as bondage. It is the control over them which, according to it, is deliverance:

*bandha indriya-vikṣepo mokṣa eṣāṁ ca saṁyamah*¹⁸

The *Bhaviṣya-purāṇa* refers to the distraction of the senses by worldly objects, which, according to it, are hard to resist:

*viṣayā durjayāḥ pumbhir indriyākaraṣṇaḥ sadā*¹⁹

Indian culture has always laid the greatest emphasis on *ācāra*, good conduct, which it has regarded as *paramo dharmah*²⁰, the quintessence of righteousness, to the extent that the one who is devoid of it, even the Vedas, the holiest of the holy, cannot redeem: *ācārahīnaṁ na punanti vedāḥ*²¹. *Ācāra* expressed through another word *śīla* is the best ornament of a person: *śīlaṁ param bhūṣaṇam*.²² According to the *Padma-purāṇa*, one who observes *śīla*, good conduct, he alone lives: *śīlasya pālanam kurvan yo jīvati sa jīvati*²³, which means that life has meaning only if one observes *śīla*, otherwise it is mere existence, just vegetation. For a person of bad disposition and conduct, *kuśīla*, the same *Purāṇa* says, the riches are a mere dirt (*mala*); for a person of good disposition and conduct (*sādhu-śīla*), even poverty is an ornament:

kuśīlasya vibhavaḥ kevalam malam

*janasya sādhu-śīlasya dāridryam api bhūṣaṇam*²⁴

Some of the prominent features of this *ācāra* or *śīla* are respect to parents, teachers and guests, on which Indian tradition has continued to lay great emphasis since days of yore, the Upaniṣadic commandment still ringing in the ears: *mātr-devo bhava, pitr-devo bhava, ācārya-devo bhava, atithi-devo bhava*. This respect to the foursome bordering on worship, they being looked upon as *devas*, the deities, finds full echo in the *Purāṇas* as well. The *Skanda-purāṇa* declares that those who serve their parents are the best of the devotees of the Lord.

*mātā-pitroś ca śuśrūṣāṁ kurvate ye narottomāḥ
te vai bhāgavatottamāḥ*²⁵

The *Padma-purāṇa* proclaims that for a son the place where his parents live is without doubt the Gaṅgā and the holy places like Gayā and Puṣkara:

*tatra gaṅgā gayā līrtham tatra puṣkaram eva ca
yatra mātā pitā tiṣṭhet putrasyāpi na saṁśayaḥ*²⁶

It further says that a son who regularly washes the feet of his parents has his daily bath in the Gaṅgā²⁷. Proceeding further, it says that he who circumambulates his mother and father circumambulates the whole earth with its seven continents:

*mātaram pitaram caiva yas tu kuryāt pradakṣiṇam
pradakṣiṇīkṛtā tena sapta-dvīpā vasundharā*²⁸

Now, if the mother and the father bring a person into this world, it is the teacher who opens the doors of knowledge to him. It is a sin to forget him, even that one who just had taught only one syllable, just one word or the meaning of it:

*akṣarasyāpi caikasya padārthasya padasya vā
dātāram vismaran pāpī kiṁ punar dharma-deśinam*²⁹

According to the *Skanda-purāṇa*, if the teacher is happy, all the gods would be happy, including Indra. Reverse would be the case otherwise:

*gurau tuṣṭe ca tuṣṭāḥ syur devāḥ sarve savāsavāḥ
gurau ruṣṭe ca ruṣṭāḥ syur devāḥ sarve savāsavāḥ*³⁰

There could be some people—indeed there are some—in this strange world, who may turn to some other person and show him respect in preference to their teacher. The *Varāha-purāṇa* has a sure word of condemnation for them. They meet with misfortune, it says, and whatever they offer in charity goes in vain:

*gurau sati tu yaś cānyam āśrayet pūjayet sudhīḥ
sa durgatim avāpnoti dattam asya ca niṣphalam*³¹

The gift must be offered consciously first to one's teacher and then to someone else. The teacher may be learned or not, he is verily

Janārdana (Lord Kṛṣṇa):

*prayatnena gurau pūrvam paścād anyasya dāpayet|
avidyo vā avidyo vā gurur eva janārdanaḥ||*³²

The *Purāṇa* is here laying down priorities for a person. When it comes to showing respect or making offerings, the first priority should be the teacher from whom one has had first lessons. Later a person may come into contact with someone more knowledgeable than his teacher. There is no reason for him to fall in for that someone else in showing his esteem over and above his teacher. Little or more knowledge has not to be the criterion in determining the order of preference for showing respect. The *Purāṇa* is very clear in this respect. It is the teacher who must have the precedence.

It is due to the pre-eminent position of the teacher that the *Skanda-purāṇa* enjoins total obedience to him. His words are only to be obeyed, and not to be ignored:

*yat kimcid vā samādiṣṭo guruṇā tat samācareḥ|
ājñapto guruṇā vipraḥ na tad-vākyam tu laṅghayet||*³³

According to the *Brhama-vaivarta-purāṇa*, that person is learned, is knowledgeable, is secure, is meritorious who obeys the words of his teacher. He meets with success at every step:

*sa paṇḍitaḥ sa ca jñānī sa kṣemī sa ca punyavān|
guror vacas-karo yo hi kṣemaṁ tasya pade pade||*³⁴

Now, a word about *atithi*, guest. He is described in the *Skanda-purāṇa* as worthy of respect of everybody:

*agnir dvijānām vipraś ca varṇānām ramaṇaḥ striyām|
guruḥ pitā ca putrāṇām sarvasyābhyāgato guruḥ||*³⁵

The belief in *karman* and reincarnation (*punar-janman*) are deeply ingrained in Indian psyche. Text after text has spoken about it, sage after sage has expounded it. Except the *Cārvākas* and some other thinkers, it has found general acceptance in Indian society. 'As you sow so shall you reap' is at the basis of it. One has to reap the reward of whatever actions, good or bad, one might have performed. The next birth is determined by them and the prosperity and the adversity going with it. This is the view echoed in the *Padma-purāṇa* stanza which says that it is because of the actions in the previous births that some people are born as *āryas* and some as *mlecchas*, some with good wealth and some extremely poor.

*āryā mlecchāś ca tatrāpi jāyante pūrva-karmaṇaḥ |
tathā kecid dhanenādhyāḥ kecid atyanta-durvidhāḥ ||*³⁶

Actually, it is *karman*, action, which is Vedhas, Prajāpati, the Creator. It is *karman* which fashions beings, assigns them race, colour, creed, means of subsistence, and so on. The *Mahā-purāṇa* says the Vidhi, Sraṣṭṛ, Vidhātṛ, Daiva, Purākṛta, Karman and Īśvara are just different words for the same thing; they are mere synonyms:

*vidhiḥ sraṣṭā vidhātā ca daivam karma purā kṛtam |
īśvaraś ceti paryāyā vijñeyāḥ karma-vedhasaḥ ||*³⁷

People get the fruit of their actions in proportion to their—or their actions'—nature:

*karmaṇām ucitaṁ teṣāṁ prāṇinām jayate phalam*³⁸

That being the case, it is in their own interest that people perform good actions. With merit earned through them, they would have happiness. With their actions earning demerit, they would court unhappiness. Says the *Padma-purāṇa*:

*punyaena labhyate saukhyam apunyaena ca duḥkhitāi |
karmaṇām ucitaṁ lokaḥ sarvaḥ phalam upāśnute ||*³⁹

Death would forcibly carry away a person, says the *Agni-purāṇa*, if whatever fruit of actions one is to reap in the present birth had been reaped:

*āyusye karmaṇi kṣiṇe prasahya harate janam*⁴⁰

But if some fruit of the actions still remains to be reaped, a person would not meet with death even if pierced with hundreds of arrows: *viddhaḥ śara-śatair api*.⁴¹ It is necessary for a person, therefore, to go in for actions with judicious application of mind. There are actions which are enjoined for certain types of people. A Brahmin is to engage himself in pursuit of learning and spiritual activities, a Kṣatriya is to apply himself to martial acts, and so on. Now, it is imperative for him to stick to those actions under all circumstances, even in adversity, says the *Brahmaṇḍa-purāṇa*:

*sādhu vāsādhu vā karma yasya yad vihitam purā |
tad eva tena kartavyam āpady api kathaṇcana ||*⁴²

Indian culture has always aimed at producing a good and decent human being, always eager to pick up good qualities, as the *Ādi-*

purāṇa says: *guṇa-grhyo hi sajjanaḥ*. A graphic picture of a good human being is given by this *Purāṇa* which should always remain an ideal to be achieved by all:

sadbhāvena haren mitram sambhrameṇa ca bāndhavān|
strī-bhrtyān prema-dānābhyām dākṣiṇyenetaram janam||

anindā para-kṛtyeṣu svadharma-paripālanam|
kṛpaṇeṣu dayālutvaṁ sarvatra madhurā girāḥ||

bandhubhir baddha-saṁyogaḥ svajane caturasratā|
ucitānuvidhāyitvam iti vṛttam mahātmanām||⁴³

The conduct of the high-souled one is as follows: he should win over a friend by goodwill, the relatives by trust, the women with love, the servants with gifts, and others with politeness. He should not engage himself in finding fault with the actions of others, he should carry out his duties, be kind to the lowly and be sweet with everybody. He should maintain good relations with his kinsmen, be fair in his dealings with his kith and kin and do whatever is in order.

One who is of the type mentioned above, is a good human being. And the development of such good human being is basic to Indian culture. The *Purāṇas* being the repositories of this culture have enough statements in them, thrown in between their countless narratives which recount the imperatives, for this good human being, a cultured person, who is useful to everybody and everything around him.

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The Concept and Practice of Karuṇā in Hindu-Buddhist Thought

While English has only three words, pity, mercy and compassion in the sense of helping others when in adverse circumstances, Sanskrit has double that number, *anukampā*, *anukrośa*, *anugraha*, *karuṇā*, *kṛpā* and *dayā*, which is a proof, if ever that were needed, of the importance the Indian tradition attaches to it. Generally these Sanskrit words are taken to be synonymous with each other but, as is the case with many other synonyms, may not really be so. Each one of these may represent a shade of the feeling which in its entirety may be difficult of expression. The most common of these words is *dayā* which Tulasīdāsa, the great saint-poet, has proclaimed as the source or the root of *dharma*:

*dayā dharma kā mūla hai pāpa mūla abhimāna
tulasī dayā na chorīye jab lag ghaṭa meṇ prāṇa*

“*Dayā*, compassion is the root of *dharma*, pride or arrogance is the root of sin. Says Tulasī, do not give up *dayā* so long as you have life in you.”

This *dayā* would be possible only if one has cultivated the spirit that all beings are equal. With that spirit one can identify oneself with others and own their sorrow and suffering. Just as a person would try to relieve himself of his troubles, his suffering, by putting up the requisite efforts, in the same way would he try to remove those of others. That is the *samadr̥ṣṭi*, the feeling of commonness which propels a person to do all he can, even to risk his life as in

Keynote Address at the International Conference on “The Great Religions of Asia : A Study in the Concept and Practice of Karuṇā (Compassion)”, Lumbini, Nepal, November 19, 1999. Chair : Dr. B.K. Modi.

the case of rescuing a person drowning in a river or caught up in flames in a building on fire or to surrender all he has, even his hard-earned savings, to render help to others so that they could be saved and their suffering mitigated. It is immaterial whether he knows the others or not. It is just the right impulse at the right moment. That is *dayā*. That is how it is defined in the *Vāyu-purāṇa*:

*ātmavat sarvabhūteṣu yā hitāyāhitāya ca |
samā pravartate drṣṭiḥ kṛtsnā hy eṣā dayā smṛtā¹ ||*

“The entire outlook characterized by treating all beings alike whether the good ones or the bad ones is termed *dayā*.”

The *Bhaviṣyapurāṇa* defines it as

*apare bandhuvarge vā mitre dveṣṭari vā sadā |
ātmavad vartanam yat syāt sā dayā parikīrtitā² ||*

“To treat a stranger or a relative, or friend or foe, as one’s own self is what is called *dayā*.”

Apte’s *Sanskrit-English Dictionary* reproduces a stanza; it does not give its source; which defines *dayā* as

*yatnād api parakleśam hartum yā hṛdi jāyate |
icchā bhūmisutaśreṣṭha sā dayā parikīrtitā ||*

“O Brahmin, the urge in mind that arises to put an end to some one else’s affliction, even at strain, is called *dayā*.”

Simply put all these definitions together point to *dayā* being an urge entailing conscious effort to remove or mitigate the suffering of others.

Dayā has, as it emerges from the above, a wider perspective including in its compass all beings, *sarvabhūta*, all creatures and not just a segment of them, say the human beings. Interestingly, it is only the word *dayā* which goes with the expression *sarvabhūta* and none of its so-called synonyms. One does not come across generally the words *sarvabhūtakṛpā* or *sarvabhūtakaruṇā*. The only expression that comes to one’s notice is *sarvabhūtānukampā*.

It is an exercise worth undertaking to divine the fine shade/s or nuances in the meanings of the Sanskrit words for pity and mercy or compassion listed above, not easy in the absence of the full details about their use in literature. But it is worth its while even within the constraints of the paucity of information on that score which only

a work like the Sanskrit Dictionary on Historical Principles currently under preparation in the Deccan College, Pune can provide.

We take up now the words for pity, mercy or compassion listed above in the alphabetical order. The first is *anukampā*. Pāṇini uses it in the sūtra *anukampāyām*³ which enjoins the suffix *kan* in the sense of *anukampā* which the commentary *Bālaṃanoramā* explains as *dayā*, the sense the commentary *Tattvabodhinī* also seems to imply by just quoting the Amara line *kṛpādayānukampā syāt*. But from the example *putraka*, it appears to yield the sense of endearment, *putraka* meaning dear son. This sense comes when the being is an object of loving or tender care. From this it is not difficult to slide into the sense 'to take pity,' e.g., *katham brāhmaṇī mām anukampate*,⁴ 'Oh! the Brahmin lady is taking pity on me' or *kim ujjiḥāṇajīvitām mām anukampase*,⁵ 'why are you taking pity on me who has lost (hope) of life.' The idea of pity is there but the usage points to that pity which a senior/superior/mightier extends to the junior/inferior/weaker. Even when the divine cow Nandinī uses the word for herself: *bhaktiā gurau mayy anukampayā ca*⁶ she seems to accord Dilīpa, the king who is out to exchange himself for her, a higher position. The same is the shade in the expression *bhūtānukampā tava cet* when Dilīpa makes the proposal for exchange.

Much less in use in literature than *anugraha* and *kṛpā* is the word *anukrośa*. Kālidāsa uses it in two of his works, the *Abhijñānaśākuntala* and the *Meghadūta*, in the former three times and in the latter once. Of the three times it occurs one is when Duṣyanta stricken with love finds fault with Kāmadeva for having no consideration for him, *bhagavan kāmadeva na te mayy anukrośaḥ*,⁷ the second is when Priyamvadā entertains the fiery sage Durvāsas who had inflicted the curse on Śakuntalā that Duṣyanta in whose thoughts she was immersed would forget her (for the dereliction in not receiving him (the sage) with due courtesies): *kim api punaḥ sānukrośaḥ kṛtaḥ*,⁸ 'was softened a bit'. *Anukrośa* Apte explains as 'disposed to show pity or sympathy'. He draws attention to the similarity of derivation of the two words *anukrośa* and sympathy. *Anukrośa* comes from $\sqrt{\text{kruś}}$ 'to cry' with *anu*, 'along with' while the latter is derived from $\sqrt{\text{sym}}$, 'together' and *pathos*,

'suffering, feeling'. The third time the word occurs in the work is when Śakuntalā ascribes all her misfortunes to a deed (evil one, of course) of a past birth which made her otherwise compassionate husband hard-hearted towards her: *sānukrośo 'py āryaputro mayi virasaḥ samvṛtataḥ*.⁹ *Sānukrośa* the commentator Rāghavabhaṭṭa explains as *sakṛpa*, implying thereby that both mean the same, *kṛpā* here does not go in its usual meaning of pity or mercy. Normally sympathetic Duṣyanta turned unsympathetic towards Śakuntalā when brought to him by the Ṛṣis. In the *Meghadūta* the word occurs in the last stanza where the Yakṣa concludes the message which the cloud is to carry out of *anukrośa*, *mayy anukrośabuddhyā*,¹⁰ sympathy (Mallinātha's rendering of *anukrośa* is *dayā*) arising out of the feeling of friendliness or his being separated from his beloved, *sauhārdād vā vidhura iti vā*.

Anugraha is not pity or mercy but grace or favour. It goes with higher station in life or divinities. The uses in literature testify to this. Kālidāsa uses it at least four times in his works, the first two times in the *Raghuvamśa*, once in the *Kumārasambhava* and once in the *Abhijñānaśākuntala*. The first time it occurs in the *Raghuvamśa* in the context of the lion overpowering the cow Nandinī, introducing himself as the attendant of Siva of the name of Kumbhodara whose back is sanctified by the favour, *anugraha*, that the deity extends him by placing His feet on him at the time of mounting His bull: *kailāśagauram vṛṣam ārurukṣoḥ pādārpaṇānugrahapūtaprṣṭham, avehi mām kiṅkaram aṣṭamūṭeḥ*.¹¹ The second time it occurs in the context of the father of Śravaṇa inflicting a curse on Daśaratha for mistakenly killing his young son in that he too would meet his end through grief for his son which the latter (Daśaratha) takes as a favour for that would mean that he is going to have a son (till then he had no progeny): *śāpo 'py adṛṣṭatanayānanapadmaśobhe sānugraho bhagavatā mayi pātito 'yam*.¹² In the *Kumārasambhava* it occurs in the context of Kāmadeva approaching Indra and enquiring from him as to why he has been shown the favour of being remembered: *anugrahaṁ samsmaraṇapravṛttam*.¹³ In the *Abhijñānaśākuntala* it occurs in the context of the query of the king to the friends of Śakuntalā about her antecedents to which the friends' response is that his request is just a favour: *anugraha iveyam*

abhyarthanā.¹⁴ The form *anugrāhya*, to be favoured, is used by Bāṇa in his *Kādambarī*: *kathanenātmānam anugrāhyam icchāmi*¹⁵; *na vayam anugrāhyāḥ prāyo devatānām*.¹⁶

The word most used in Sanskrit literature after *dayā* is *kṛpā* which in sense is almost indistinguishable from the former. When the Lord notices that Arjuna is totally distraught on seeing his kith and kin ranged against him in battle he is filled with mercy, *kṛpayā parayāviṣṭaḥ*.¹⁷ Pārvatī is filled with mercy for the separated Cakravāka couple : *cakravākayoḥ puro viyukte mithune kṛpāvatī*.¹⁸

The last of the words for mercy or compassion, *karuṇā*, has been defined as:

*dīṇeṣv ārteṣu bhīteṣu yācamāneṣu jīvitam |
pratikāraparā buddhiḥ kārūṇyam abhidhīyate*¹⁹

“The feeling of helping those who are in misery, pain and fear and are begging for life is what is called *kārūṇya* (*karuṇā*). Sarvārthasiddhi defines it as ‘to show mercy to the miserable’: *dīnānugrahabhāvaḥ kārūṇyam*.²⁰ The *karuṇā* resides in the Almighty, the All-powerful who is nothing but compassion (the Buddhists call it in their context *Mahākaruṇā*). Lord Rāma is said to be *karuṇāmaya*: *kākutstham karuṇāmayaṁ guṇanidhiṁ viprapriyam*. Death is cruel. So it is described *karuṇāvimukha*, averse to compassion: *karuṇāvimukhena mṛtyunā*,²¹ in Aja’s lament at the loss of Indumatī. In the *Svapnavāsavadatta* of Bhāsa when Vāsavadattā is called upon to weave a garland for the would-be-co-wife Padmāvatī, she feels bad and out comes the remark from her: *aho akaruṇāḥ khalv īśvarāḥ*²², Oh! gods are unkind (merciless). In the *Meghadūta* the Yakṣa tells the cloud that the sorry state of affairs of his consort would make the latter shed tears in the form of fresh water, for, says he, every one with tender heart (lit. wet heart) is of the nature of being compassionate: *prāyaḥ sarvo bhavati karuṇāvṛttir ādrāntarātmā*.²³ In the *Naiṣadha* the golden swan finding himself in the clutches of the king bemoans his lot, he being the support of his old mother and the young wife just delivered. How come, says he, O, (cruel) fate, kindness/compassion not hold you back (from oppressing him): *aho vidhe tvām karuṇā ruṇaddhi no*.²⁴

Kindness, sympathy, tender-heartedness, pity, mercy and compassion are values that go with humaneness. It would be a cruel

world, if these were absent. They are elevating and ennobling. Like all qualities they are in-born in some and are to be cultivated through the study of the scriptures and the contact with the good people in others. There may still be some who may just not be moved by the miseries and cries for help of others. They have hearts of steel. It is they who permit themselves the most heinous of crimes. They are perverts, *ātatāyins* and *nṛśamsas* and deserve to be put to death without a second thought: *ātatāyinam āyāntam hanyād evāvicārayan*.²⁵ It is fortunate for society that they form only a small segment of it. Not to be *ātatāyin* or *nṛśamsa* is the supreme virtue, *ānṛśamsyaṁ paro dharmah*.²⁶

Sanskrit literature is full of statements where the qualities of sympathy, pity, mercy, compassion are extolled in superlative terms. It has cases where people, holy or ordinary, high and mighty and lowly and miserable have staked their all to provide succour to others. The classic cases are those of sage Vālmiki and the Uśinara King Śibi. The *Rāmāyaṇa* of the former is a saga of the melting of his heart at the pathetic sight of the female of the Krauñca couple crying piteously, *ruṛāva karuṇāṁ giram*,²⁷ at the slaying of her companion when in love sport by a hunter. The ghastly scene of the male bird struggling on the earth bathed in blood so moved the sage, *ṛṣes tasya kāruṇyaṁ samapadyata*,²⁸ that he inflicted a curse on him never to have any respect: *mā niṣāda pratiṣṭhāṁ tvam agamah*.²⁹ It was his grief for the bird that had turned into *śloka*: *śokaḥ ślokatvam āgataḥ*.³⁰

When the news of the public outcry about Rāma taking delight in the company of Sītā, who had been forcibly carried in his lap by Rāvaṇa and lodged in the Aśokavanikā under the demon's guard, which could also mean condoning similar things on the part of their womenfolk by the citizens reached Rāma's ears, he ordered her banishment to another country, the other side of the river Gaṅgā at a lonely place in the vicinity of the hermitage of the sage Vālmiki, who when told by the sons of the Ṛṣis of their having spotted a beautiful lady crying loudly under the weight of her grief, went out to her, consoled her, brought her along and placed her in the care of the hermit ladies living in the periphery of his hermitage, introducing her as the daughter-in-law of his friend Daśaratha and the daughter of Janaka who had been banished, though without sin,

apāpā, and therefore deserving of special attention. It was in his Āsrama that Sītā delivered the twins. It was he who arranged for special protection, *rakṣā*, for them from ghosts and goblins, the elder one with the upper part of the grass, *kuśa* and the younger one with the lower part, *lava*, of the same duly sanctified by the *mantras* which he handed over to the elderly lady ascetics which they had to rub against the person of the infants who thenceforth derived their names from them (the upper and lower parts of the grass, *kuśa* and *lava*) (*Rāmāyaṇa*, Uttarakāṇḍa, 49.66). After he had composed his *Rāmāyaṇa* he taught the same to the twins when grown up a little. Its recitation by them he put to test in the company of the sages and seers in the forest who felt ecstatic and showered the young ones with all the meagre gifts they had with them. It is only after the efficacy of the recitation had been tested, he asked the young ones to proceed to Ayodhyā along with him where the Āśvamedha sacrifice arranged by Rāma was in progress and render the same in between the recess for the rituals to enable Rāma to listen to it in fulfilment of his ultimate objective of uniting Sītā with Rāma which he wanted to accomplish by twofold means of turning public opinion in favour of Sītā's acceptability; the total likeness of the physical appearance of the young ones with their father would be the proof positive of Sītā's purity and the other of Sītā being alive and could be restored to her consort if everything went well, the objective in which he eminently succeeded, the objective which had propelled him to go all the way to Ayodhyā, even though uninvited, in spite of the fact—and this really is strange—that all high and the mighty of the sages of the time had received the invitation and were participating in the sacrifice and camp in the vicinity of the city under his own arrangements. On coming to know from the young reciters about the composer of the poem, Rāma invited him and requested him to bring Sītā along which he did to make Sītā, as per Rāma's wish, pledge her purity in the assembly of the sages and the other important people. Presenting Sītā before Rāma and the congregation Vālmiki declares: "I have practised penance for thousands of years. May I not reap the fruit of it if Sītā is touched by sin":

bahuvārṣasahasrāṇi tapaścaryā mayā kṛtā

nopāśnīyām phalaṃ tasyā dṛṣṭvā yadi Maitrī

This is the sage Vālmiki who stakes his *tapasyā* of thousands of years for the sake of a hapless lady. This is an instance of compassion unmatched in the annals of the world.

An equally unmatched incident as recorded in the *Mahābhārata*³² is that of King Śibi who to save the life of a pigeon taking refuge with him (for fear of a hawk chasing it) refused to part with it and offered his own self as food for the latter.*

*As goes the story Indra and Agni out to test the righteousness of King Śibi known for it took the form of a hawk and pigeon respectively, the latter going into the thigh of the king to save itself from the former who was chasing it. The king assured the pigeon protection and would not let it go inspite of the cogent pleadings of the hawk. The hawk would not accept any other creature as a substitute either. It relented only to the extent of accepting the flesh of the king equal in weight of the pigeon which the king sliced off from his body and put on the scale. The pigeon weighing heavier every time he did it, he with all the flesh sliced off climbed on to the scale himself winning thereby undying fame for his compassion in rescuing a creature come to him for refuge and an instant place in heaven.

A vast corpus of literature going by the name of Purāṇas furnishes a number of instances wherein the qualities of kindness and compassion are depicted. Since it is not possible to take up all those instances here for constraints of space, we shall have to confine ourselves to only a few, the more telling ones among them. The *Viṣṇu-purāṇa*³³ records the story of the sage Aurva who saved the life of an unborn son of King Vāhu who could not be delivered because of a poisonous substance administered to his mother by a co-wife out of jealousy. The delivery postponed indefinitely, the king died seven years after it was due, his wife still carrying and not able to deliver, resolved to end her life, a resolve that she was made to give up by the sage. Not only that. The sage helped her deliver the child and brought it up under his care with the prescience that he would do good to society. The sage for his efforts was motivated solely by consideration of welfare of humanity. He had no personal axe to grind in all this.

The *Brahma-purāṇa*³⁴ recounts a very touching story of a pigeon couple of which one, the female one, was caught by a hunter. As chance would have it, the hunter came to spend the night under the same tree where the male of the couple was perching. In the night the female one responded to the chirping of her mate and declined the *former's* proposal to free her. She found no fault with the hunter for, according to her (the female pigeon) he was just following his profession. She even went a step further. She suggested to her mate that he take the hunter as guest and offer him food which he did by offering himself as food to him leaving him stunned and speechless.

The same Purāṇa in its 92nd Chapter recounts the story of a woman Mahī who getting widowed at a very young age went out to have an experience of the world leaving her young son in the care of the sage Gālava. In the course of her wanderings she turned into a prostitute. The son when coming of age also went out for the same purpose. As chance would have it, the mother and the son run into each other and for a while the son takes the mother as his mistress. When they come to know over a period of time the identity of each other, they want to end their life from which they are prevented by compassionate Gālava who leads them to right path.

Of the nine virtues with which the Buddha is credited one is that of compassionate conduct: *itipi so bhagavā arcām sammāsambaddho vijjacaraṇasampanno sugato lakavidu anuttaro purisadammasarathī sattha devamanussānam buddho bhagaveti*, "the exalted one, the accomplished destroyer of defilements, a Buddha perfected by himself, complete in clear knowledge and compassionate conduct, supremely good in presence and destiny, the knower of the world, the incomparable master of men to be tamed, the teacher of celestials and men, the awakener and the Lord by skilful means apportioning Dhammas." As a matter of fact, it forms the cornerstone of the Buddhist ethos, Lord Buddha himself epitomizing it in his life which is clearly borne out by the following incident.

A certain Bhikkhu was once sick with dysentery and lay fouled in his own urine and excrement. As the Buddha was going the round of the lodgings with disciple Ānanda he came to that Bhikkhu's dwelling. When he saw him lying in the condition he was, he went up to him and said: "What is your sickness, Bhikkhu?" It is

dysentery, Blessed One, said he. "But Bhikkhu, have you no attendant?" "No, Blessed One." "Why other Bhikkhus do not look after you?" "I am no one to the Bhikkhus, Lord; that is why they do not look after me." Ānanda brought some water. Both poured it and washed the Bhikkhu, raised him up and put him on the bed.

With this as the occasion and this as the reason the Buddha summoned the Bhikkhus and asked them: "Bhikkhus, is there a Bhikkhu sick in a certain dwelling?" "There is, Blessed One." "What is that Bhikkhus's illness?" "He has dysentery, Lord." Has he anyone to look after him. If he has a preceptor, he (the preceptor) as long as he lives, look after him till his recovery. His teacher, if he has one, do likewise. Or his pupil or one who has the preceptor or one who has the same teacher. If he has none of these, the community should look after him. Not to do so is an offence of wrong doing, for compassion must be voluntary and eternal."

The following Dhamma talk is also very important to show the importance and role of compassion in Buddhism.

A certain youth who lived in Savatthi heard a teacher preach Dhamma. He yielded his heart to the Sanona, went forth to homelessness and after full admission to the Sangha became known as the Thera Tissa. As time wore on, an eruption broke out on his body. At first it appeared in the form of boils no bigger than mustard seeds but as the disease progressed they assumed successively the size of kidney, beans, chick-peas, jujube stones, emblyio myrobalans and then beael fruit. Finally they burst open and his whole body got covered with open sores winning him the nickname Thera Pūtigatta (rottenbodied) Tissa. After a time his bones began to disintegrate and no one was willing to take care of him. His under and upper robes which were stained with dry blood, looked like fibrous pancakes. His fellow residents, unable to care for him, cast him out and he lay on the ground without anyone to look after him. The Buddha took pity on him. He knew that Bhikkhu Tissa was ripe for Arhantship. He thought to himself: "That Bhikkhu has been abandoned by his associates; at the present time he has no other refuge than me." Accordingly he went to the hall where fire was kept. He washed the boils of the Bhikkhu, placed him on the brazier, waited in the fire room for the water to boil and when he knew that it was hot, went and took hold of the end of the bed where the

Bhikkhu was lying. He caused a measure to be brought and sprinkled hot water. Then he went and taking his stand near Tissa, moistened his body with hot water and rubbed and bathed it and then changed the robes. With his heart full of compassion he took his stand at the pillow and said to the Bhikkhu: "Bhikkhu, consciousness will depart from you, your body will become of no use." At the conclusion of his teaching Thera Pūtigatta Tissa attained Arhantship and passed to Nibbāna. The Buddha himself performed his funeral rites over the body and taking the relics, caused a shrine to be erected.

The following address of Lord Buddha to the Bhikkhus tellingly underscores the importance that he attached to compassion: "O, Bhikkhus, the secure, safe path leading to joy has been opened by me, the treacherous path blocked off. Bhikkhus, whatever may be done out of compassion by a teacher seeking the welfare of his disciples, that has been done by me out of compassion for you. So be compassionate and full of love."

The compassion of Lord Buddha extended just for the well-being of society has justly been termed *Mahākaruṇā*, 'The Great Compassion.' This is not peculiar to the Buddha alone. It characterizes the Supreme Entity in the entire Indian tradition. The Lord is *Karuṇāvaruṇālaya*, the ocean of Karuṇā or *karuṇāvatāra*. It is through His *Karuṇā* that he runs the entire show of the universe.

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7. Ed. Kale, M.R., Gopal Narayen & Co. Bombay, 1920. Footnote, p. 64.
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10. *Uttaramegha*, verse 52.
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34. Chapter 80.

How the Rāmāyaṇa Began

There is a well-known saying in Sanskrit: *Rāmādivad vartitavyam na Rāvaṇādivat*, one should conduct oneself like Rāma and the like and not like Rāvaṇa and the like. While Rāma and the like are epitomes of virtue, Rāvaṇa and the like are symbols of depravity and degradation to the point of being designated demons in spite of their noble lineage and high learning, Rāvaṇa, the chieftain of them, himself being the son of the sage Pulastya and master of all the four Vedas. The *Rāmāyaṇa* depicting the life of Rāma purports to uphold morality and ethics. A combination of the two words *Rāma* and *ayana*, the latter meaning path—the same as is found in *dakṣiṇāyana* and *uttarāyana*—the *Rāmāyaṇa* literally means the ‘path of Rāma’. What is this path which Vālmiki describes? Why should have Vālmiki picked up Rāma only for delineation in his poem? The answer to these questions is found in the conversation between him and the divine sage Nārada which marks the threshold to his work. Vālmiki does not come straight to Rāma. He is shown to be in the quest of one in his time—mark the word *sāmpratam*, now, in the world, *loke*, who is endowed with myriad qualities which he spells out in clear terms. The ideal man of his vision, he thinks, is one who is crowned with qualities, is brave, is knowledgeable about duty, is grateful, is truthful, is firm in vow, is of good character, is engaged in the welfare of all beings, is learned and capable, is lovely to behold, has control over himself and his anger, is endowed with splendour, is devoid of malice and is such that when he flies into anger in battle even the gods would be scared of him. Nārada realizes that the qualities that Vālmiki would like to see in his ideal man are

Keynote Address at the National Seminar on “The Rāmāyaṇa Tradition in Historical Perspective”, H.N.B. Garhwal University, Srinagar, November 4, 2003. Chair : Shri N. Natarajan, Vice-Chancellor of the University

not to be met with easily, they are rare, *durlabhāḥ*. But then the earth is not devoid of a man who is endowed with them. There is one among the teeming millions on this vast planet called the earth who does have these qualities and more. Since he is cognizant of the goings on in the three worlds, he already has in his mind the name of such a person. So with alacrity, *prahr̥ṣṭaḥ* he proceeds to answer Vālmiki's query as soon as he finishes it. And when he speaks of such a person, it is not just an outburst. He has carefully assessed the person and is giving his well-considered opinion on him, *vakṣyāmy ahaṁ buddhyā*. His assessment he ensconces in twelve stanzas. He is very minute in his analysis, not missing any point in the ideal person making him a paragon of all virtues. It is a good case study as to what qualities the thinkers and intellectuals of ancient India wanted their heroes, particularly the best ones among them, to possess. It is interesting to note that a good physical appearance is one among them. This goes well with the perception: *yatrākṛtis tatra guṇā vasanti*, where there is a good physical appearance, a good figure, there reside qualities. Since Nārada proclaims Rāma of the Ikṣvāku race as the hero Vālmiki was looking for, he describes him, as ever lovely to behold, *ekapriyaḥ*, symmetrical with well-proportioned limbs, lustrous and possessed of auspicious marks, *samaḥ samavibhaktāṅgo lakṣmīvāṇ chubhalakṣaṇaḥ*, with shining complexion, *snigdhavarnaḥ*, with beautiful and graceful forehead, *suśirāḥ sulalāṭaḥ*. Though handsome, *abhirāmaḥ* he has to be powerful *vīryavān*, mighty, *suvikramaḥ* and the slayer of enemies, *śatrunibarhaṇaḥ*, qualities which his stout physique must reflect. He has to be manly even in his looks. Rāma fulfils this requirement. He is broad-shouldered, has plum shoulder-blades, *gūḍhajatrauḥ*, has arms going down the knees, *ājānubāhuḥ*, has well developed chest, *mahoraskaḥ* and has expansive eyes, *viśālākṣaḥ*, a description which must have been at the mind of Kālidāsa in his description in his *Raghuvaṃśa* of Dilīpa as *vyūḍhorasko vṛṣaskandhaḥ śālaprāṇśūr mahābhujah*¹ and of Raghu as *yuvā yugavyāyatabāhur aṃsalaḥ kapāṭavakṣāḥ pariṇaddhakandharaḥ*.² While Vālmiki has *mahoraskaḥ*, Kālidāsa has *vyūḍhoraskaḥ* and *pariṇaddhakandharaḥ*. While Vālmiki has *ājānubāhuḥ*, Kālidāsa has *mahābhujah* and *yugavyāyatabāhuḥ*. There is difference only in words. The idea is the same.

As for the qualities of head and heart, Rāma is restrained, learned, patient, self-controlled, majestic, duty-knowing, firm in promise, always engaged in the good of the subjects, renowned, knowledgeable, pure (in body and spirit), obedient (towards seniors), well-versed in self-knowledge, Prajāpati incarnate, blessed with prosperity, the destroyer of enemies, the protector of living beings,³ Dharma and the duties of his class and his kinsmen, well-versed in the profundities of the Vedas and the Vedāṅgas, the disciplines auxiliary to the Veda, archery and the dicta of all the sciences, brilliant with good memory, the darling of all, upright, proficient and not of low spirit. He is resorted to by the good people as is the ocean by the rivers. He is noble with equal regard for all. In depth he is like the ocean, in fortitude like the Himālaya, in prowess like Viṣṇu, in personal attractiveness like the moon, in anger like the fire at the time of Dissolution, in forgiveness like the earth, in gifts like Kubera and in truth like Dharma in different form.

It is no wonder then that Vālmiki should have been commissioned to describe the life story of such a man.

It is worth noting here that when Vālmiki was preferring his query to Nārada he had no idea—there is no record of it in his work—of composing a work on him. It was an innocent query to a sage who is expected to be more knowledgeable with his unrestricted movement in all the three worlds. Even after Vālmiki's query had been answered, he did not develop any desire to take up for description the life of the person of his vision. He was asked to describe it in full by no less a divinity than Brahmā, the Creator, himself who made a sudden appearance before him taking him all by surprise: *Rāmasya caritaṃ kṛtsnaṃ kuru tvam ṛsisattama*.⁴ The command of Brahmā had come after the episode of *Krauñcavadha*, the killing of the male one of the Krauñca couple when in the act of love-making, a hunter had pierced it by his arrow at which the female one had cried out in writhing agony prompting impulsively the passing by Vālmiki into pronouncing the deadliest and by now the all-too-well-known curse, *mā niṣāda pratiṣṭhām tvam agamaḥ śāśvatīḥ samāḥ*;⁵ may you never get respect (in society) ever and ever in that you brought down one of the Krauñca couple when overtaken with passion. This episode intervened the close of the conversation with Nārada and the appearance of Brahmā. This had

so upset the sage that out of the depths of his bestirred heart some imprecatory words, just reproduced, came out in an unprecedented rhythm setting the sage athinking himself as to what he had uttered: *kim idaṁ vyāhṛtaṁ mayā?*

Vālmīki was still absorbed in the episode of the Krauñcavadha when he faced Brahmā; his mind still intent on what he had seen: *tadgatenaiṣa manasā vālmīkir dhyānam āsthitaḥ*.

It may be mentioned here that Nārada while speaking to Vālmīki of Rāma as the embodiment of the qualities of his (Vālmīki's) description had recounted in brief outlines his life story as well giving the impression of the condensed version of the great epic.

While commissioning Vālmīki to describe the Rāma story Brahmā refers to this outline story. He says to Vālmīki that he has to take up for delineation all that Nārada had told him and more. It is through His grace that everything concerning Rāma, all that is known about him or otherwise, will be all too clear to him. Even the most intimate incidents in his life he would know. He just has to start working on it. He has chosen, He tells him, even the metre for him. It is the self-same one which is going to be known by the name śloka and no other: *śloka bhavatu nānyathā*⁶ through which he had expressed his grief. It was because of his wish that the words uttered by him in intense grief had escaped his lips: *macchandād eva te brahman nirgateyaṁ sarasvatī*.⁷ Now that type of composition has come out of him, which to him might have been an enigma but which, however, was not, that being the intent of the Creator Himself as explained by Him, it is for him to start composing in it now, it being not just metrical; it also being set in a rhythm which can go very well with a stringed instrument with the same number of syllables divided in quadrants: *pādabaddho 'kṣarasamas tantrīlayasamanvitaḥ*'. With this, departs Brahmā and Vālmīki starts composing his work.

It may be pointed out here that there are three episodes before the actual composition of the *Rāmāyaṇa*:

- (i) The conversation between Vālmīki and Nārada,
- (ii) The slaying by a hunter of the Krauñca bird,
- (iii) Commissioning of Vālmīki by Brahmā for describing the life history of Rāma.

It is worth pondering as to why these episodes should have been introduced before the actual start of the work. Coming to the first episode, it looks rather strange that it should begin straight with a query by Vālmīki to Nārada about a person in his time who is endowed with qualities that he lists. That must not have been so indicated by the tiny word *paripapraccha* in the context of Vālmīki preferring the query. The 'pracch' with 'pari' means counter-questioning, vide the *Bhagavadgītā*: *tad viddhi praṇipātena paripraśnena sevayā*.⁷ Now, counter-questioning presupposes questioning. What it was is not recorded in the text but which can well be inferred. The normal course would have been something like this: Nārada would have descended onto the Āśrama of Vālmīki and he would have been received by him with full honours. He (Nārada) would have told him that he is coming to him as he is wont to move about here and there after visiting a number of places where he had met many people and seen many things. To this Vālmīki must have counter-questioned: Was there anyone among the people he had met or would have come to know about in this world, *loke*, which would make him the best among men. To this Nārada would have replied, as indeed he did, that there is one, Rāma, the scion of the Ikṣvākus who answers his description of qualities. To corroborate his statement he recounted in brief the main events of his life thus laying the groundwork for the theme of the *Rāmāyaṇa*.

For any work the first priority is the selection of its theme. In the case of the *Rāmāyaṇa*, it is interesting to note, it was not for Vālmīki to do it. As a matter of fact, he had no idea of it. It was Brahmā who did it for him. This is the interlink between the three episodes. Nārada recounting it, Brahmā selecting it for Vālmīki and Brahmā's appearing before Vālmīki and commissioning him to write the life story of Rāma. The episode of the slaying of Krauñca (*Krauñcavadha*) is thrown in between, the purpose of which seems to be to bring out the creative artist in Vālmīki. This also shows how sensitive Vālmīki was, just the type the creative artists are. The best in the artist comes out when his sensitivities are stirred. And this is precisely what happened in the case of Vālmīki. He got so emotionally surcharged that the Krauñca-killing incident became the sole preoccupation of his thoughts after the gruesome event. He went on speaking about it to his pupil Bharadvāja and other disciples.

Even when Brahmā was in front of him, as pointed out earlier, his mind remained engrossed in it. That was the mental state in which he was asked to compose a work on the Rāma story. And certainly it could not have been better. The story with its frequent bouts of grief precisely required this type of mindset which was stricken with grief. If a person could be totally involved in an ordinary mundane incident, he could be equally totally involved in other similar incidents. And, it needs no emphasis, to say that with total involvement comes out the best artistic creation which transcends time and space and which lasts on the earth as last the rivers and mountains.

A question is: Why was it necessary for Vālmiki to develop a mindset which was stricken with grief before being asked to delineate the story of Rāma? The answer to this lies in the nature of the story itself. All its main incidents are enveloped in grief. Daśaratha goes to a forest and unwittingly hits at a young lad Śravaṇa, the only support of his blind parents who losing him imprecate him with the loss of his life through the grief of his son, which he has to suffer when his son whose coronation he had fixed the following day has to proceed to forest in exile for fourteen years under the machinations of his ladylove on whom he had fawned but who would just pay no heed to his entreaties. Bharata is stricken with grief on coming to know of the news of the death of his father and the exile of his brother. His vows to prove his innocence in all that had happened in his absence, melted even the heart of Kausalyā who felt tragically cheated as it were in seeing her son not installed as the king, an opportunity she had been looking forward to, after having been sidelined by her husband, even though occupying the position of the chief queen officially, for her redemption. Highly moving is the incident of Bharata's return from Citrakūṭa on his failure to persuade Rāma to return to Ayodhyā and accept the kingdom with a pair of sandals and placing them on the throne in the dress of a mendicant in the village Nandigrāma outside Ayodhyā, the capital. The grief in the story runs on. Even while living the life of recluses, the threesome, Rāma, Lakṣmaṇa and Sītā come to grief with Śūrpaṇakhā chipping in prompting Lakṣmaṇa to chop off her nose and ears when she pounced upon Sītā in the idea of her being the impediment in her unsuccessful seducing of the latter's husband,

leading ultimately to a long period of revenge resulting in endless battles with the demons which saw Khara and Dūṣana and the vast hordes perish and the abduction of Sītā by the wily Rāvaṇa which made the heart-broken brothers Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa go about from pillar to post to look for her in the course of which they were called upon to perform the cremation of their unknown ally, the eagle Jaṭāyus who had collapsed on giving fight, even though worn out by age, to the mighty demon Rāvaṇa but who could manage to continue breathing only to break the sad news of Sītā's abduction to her husband and the brother-in-law. Then comes the Sugrīva-Vālin episode. The monkey brothers fight a fierce duel but when one of them falls, the other cries relentlessly. And then comes the great battle of Laṅkā where one hero after another falls engulfing the entire demon household in grief. In Rāma's camp Lakṣmaṇa is mortally wounded breaking Rāma to the point of losing all equanimity which had till then been his *forte*. Confined to the Aśokavāṭikā Sītā suffers all indignities and humiliations and deceptions like being shown the dead body of Rāma which, had it not been the intervention of Trijaṭā, would have led her to lose her life. In the last scene of the battle Rāvaṇa falls and Mandodarī cries. So does Vibhiṣaṇa. And then comes the most heart-rending of the scenes: the fire ordeal of Sītā. It is not the end of the grief for her. She is sent into exile, this time under the orders of her husband under attack from his people for accepting her back in spite of her having lived in a demon's house. The sad story has the curtain drawn on it with the second test to which the hapless lady is put in a full assembly at the time of the horse sacrifice to prove her fidelity for the second time. She closes her eyes, utters her vow of fidelity three times. The earth parts, comes out she with a throne, puts Sītā on it and goes down. Sītā is entombed in the earth. That is the Rāma-story or for that matter the great story of Sītā: *Sītāyāś caritaṁ mahat*.

Is it not the case that the grief which had started out flowing with the slaying of the Krauñca bird continued flowing till the entombment of Sītā? Was it not proper, therefore, to prepare Vālmīki mentally for all that was to follow?

A requirement for a creative composition, apart from the other two, the theme and the sensitivity, is inspiration which is what is provided by the Brahma episode, which the sceptics may dismiss

as a mere myth with no basis in reality. The question is not whether there is a deity called Brahmā or not. The question is that of divinity, the inspiration emanating from an invisible source. One does not have to go to ancient texts in proof of it which one can find in one's own life-time. The writer of these lines is tempted to recount his own experience in the context of his own two works, the *Śrīgurugovindasimhacarita*, on the life history of Guru Gobind Singh, the Tenth Sikh Guru and the *Śrīrāmākīrtimahākāvya*, on the Rāma story of Thailand called the Ramakien therein. In both the cases verse after verse rolled in with no effort whatsoever. In the case of the second work no change was effected in the text, not even a syllable or a letter changed in the course of the one thousand two hundred stanzas, not necessitating the preparation of the press copy, the draft copy itself serving the purpose, a fact which when revealed to one of the greatest Oriya writers and orators of the time Prof. Gouri Kumar Brahma made him go into a trance and remark: Professor, you did not write the work. Some divinity positioned itself in you and made you write it. How correct he was! Such unusual things never happen without divine intervention. When this could happen to me, an ordinary individual, how come then it could not have happened to a sage like Vālmiki? Brahmā episode merely symbolizes a mystic experience, call it the divine inspiration.

One thing about the *Rāmāyaṇa* that needs to be stressed here is that it is not merely a piece of poetry: it is a song, a rhythmic number which could be sung, as said earlier, to the accompaniment of stringed instruments. Not that it could be sung, it actually was sung in the time of Vālmiki himself at least two times, as the text itself records. After Vālmiki had composed it, he started thinking of somebody whom he could teach it. Just then came along Kuśa and Lava, the two sons of Rāma, significantly called Kuśilava, a term signifying an actor in later literature. They picked it up from him and sang it as premier of it as it were, before the sages invited in the forest to listen to it. So immensely pleased were they with it that they showered the young ones with all kinds of frugal presents they had with them, the deer skin, the lion cloth, the birch bark, the staff and so on. The premier was followed by the final show at Ayodhyā at the time of Rāma's horse sacrifice at intervals in the ritual affording Rāma a little bit of rest and leisure. It was during some of

these recesses that the Rāma story which the young ones had been asked to sing by Vālmiki that had caught the ears of Rāma.

This was the finale of the work which has continued to inspire generations of mankind for thousands of years. Its story is pan-Asian, every country of Asia claiming it as its own under its own name and theme-variations. It is *Ramavatthu* in Myanmar, *Phra Lak, Phra Lam* in Laos, *Ramakien* in Thailand, *Ramaker* in Kampuchea, *Hikayat Seri Ram* in Malaysia and *Rāmāyaṇa Kakawin* in Indonesia. Michelet, the famous French historian describes it as early as 1884 in the following words:

Whoever has done or willed too much, let him drink from this deep cup a long draught of life and youth... Everything is narrow in the West-Greece is small and I stifle. Judea is dry and I pant. Let me look forward to lofty Asia and the profound East for a while. There lies my great poem, as vast as the Indian Ocean, blessed, gilded with the sun, the book of divine harmony wherein is no dissonance. A serene peace reigns there in the midst of conflict, an infinite sweetness, a boundless fraternity, which spreads over all living beings, an ocean of love, of pity, of clemency.⁸

This is the *Rāmāyaṇa* of Vālmiki that had come into being under the most mysterious of the circumstances with an awakening to its beauty and grandeur from an emotionally surcharged sensitive heart with a total involvement in it. The *Rāmāyaṇa* transcends time and space and is a piece of world literature now.

References

1. 1.13
2. 3.34
3. *Rāmāyaṇa*, I. 8.13
4. *ibid.*, I.2.32
5. *ibid.*, I.2.15
6. *ibid.*, I.2.18
7. *ibid.*, I.2.31
8. Quoted by Jawaharlal Nehru, *Discovery of India*, Signet Press, Calcutta, 1946, p.81

Value Paradigms for Education in 21st Century

The basic purpose of education is threefold, one, to acquire knowledge of various disciplines to be able to lead a meaningful day to day life, two, to train the intellect to think independently to lead to the evolution of a creative process which may culminate in new discoveries and explorations ultimately and three, to transform a human being from his original animal nature to that of a human being, to create a decent man as a useful member of society. All these three need to be viewed in an ascending order. The basic idea of education is to provide enlightenment to an unenlightened man, to enable him to differentiate between what is good and bad, what is right and wrong as also to access information about man and nature around him as also the society he is member of, the country he lives in and the world he is part of. It is possible, nay very much probable, that the information may make him more aware of what goes on around and may sharpen his intellect to grasp it more clearly but may not turn him into a decent human being that he needs to be. It is more likely that the sharpened intellect and more of awareness may sharpen the animal instinct if he is not given a big dose of instruction in human values. There is a well-known saying in Sanskrit *sākṣaro viparītaś ced rākṣaso bhavati dhruvam*, if the word *sākṣara* is read in the reverse order it turns into *rākṣasa* which implies that if a literate or educated person were to take to wrong path, he would acquire demoniac

Keynote Address at the National Seminar on "Value Paradigms for Education in 21st Century", Gurukul Kangri University, Haridwar, May 14, 2004. Chair : Prof. Swatantra Kumar, Vice-Chancellor of the University. Chief Guest : Prof. Rajasekharan Pillai, Vice-Chairman, University Grants Commission.

propensities causing far greater damage than an uneducated simple man can do. His education, his training would supply him with the wherewithal to think of the ways and means of causing harm. He will be far greater danger to society than an unlettered farmer or a labourer who just goes about his work unmindful of the newer and newer techniques of cheating and trickery, creating mayhem and bedlam, looting and bloodletting. It is here that the values come in.

Now the question is what are values. One single Sanskrit word *dharma* would encompass all of them. The values are those qualities that sustain society which the etymology of the above word testifies, *dhāraṇād dharma ity āhuḥ*. The other question is as to their number, as to how many they are. Anything that leads to goodness and decency is a value. There are scores and scores of them. The larger the number of values or qualities that a man acquires, the more decent and sophisticated and venerable he is, to the extent of winning acceptability for sainthood or divinity for himself. Rāma, the son of Daśaratha, was such a paragon of virtues as to have been invested with the status of godhood. This needs to be appreciated with an episode from the *Rāmāyaṇa* which begins with an enquiry of its author directed at Nārada descended on his hermitage as to who there is in his time, *sāmpratam*, in the world, *loke*, who is possessed of certain qualities, he lists sixteen of them including dynamism, gratitude, truthfulness, steadfastness, good character, wisdom, gentle disposition, self-esteem, control over anger with no feeling of jealousy or envy. Nārada tells him that there is one who is possessed of all these and more. And he is Rāma of the *Ikṣvāku* race, *Ikṣvākuvaṁśaprabhavo rāmo nāma janaiḥ śrutaḥ*. He then starts to enumerate his qualities which go up to the high figure of sixty seven! When Daśaratha feeling the weight of age wants to pass on the baton of State to Rāma, he takes into confidence his Council of Ministers. While disclosing his mind to it he recounts Rāma's qualities which make him fit for the choice. And the number there goes considerably higher. It stands at the astounding figure of ninety one! Not that one has to possess all of them. Nobody needs to be superman. He should not be content only to be man but also try to be a decent man, a good

man, a useful member of society. It is to this end that education has to strive.

For this the pre-requisite is a good teacher who has equipped himself with the most necessary of these qualities. He is not to be just an instructor imparting to his students the knowledge of three *rs* but has to teach them right conduct, an *ācārya* in the real sense, so called because he helps his students inculcate the right conduct, *ācāryaḥ kasmāt? ācāraṁ grāhayati*. This *ācāra* he has to teach through example and precept. For this he has to discipline himself first before he can hope to discipline his students. His role is central to the development of the personality of a student entrusted to his care. He has to be well-equipped in his subject but at the same time he has to present himself to his students as a man of character. What example can he set before his students if he were to tell lies, or use foul language or accept illegal gratification or shirk work and cut classes or encourage his students to join his tuition classes at his residence after the school or college hours or engage in petty politics of vendetta or revenge against his other colleagues using his impressionable students as pawns in the game? The difficulty is that teaching has come to be considered these days as a profession though the word 'noble' is prefixed to it, noble profession, a calling, a means of livelihood as any other while the fact is that it is a mission. When it had been pursued as such India produced stalwarts, repositories of learning, the treasure troves of knowledge. It is imperative that it is only those who are fired with the desire to spread knowledge come forward to teach and not the frustrated lot whining for not having been able to make the grade for the high profile four to five figure salary posts with a string of perks going with them. The education system in India cannot afford to be carried on with a grumbling crestfallen bunch of men and women, low in self-esteem, eying more affluent and well-to-do segments of society. For countless centuries India had teachers who were the most underpaid, not even paid, members of society. But, this did not prevent them in proper discharge of their duties. They were teachers because they wanted to be teachers knowing full well that there were no pecuniary incentives waiting for them and that

with the work they had chosen they were courting for themselves a full life time of total austerity.

Things have changed now. So has the social outlook. Much water has flowed down the Gaṅgā. The old order has changed yielding place to new. The austerity is not expected of the teachers now. But the motivation for teaching certainly is. At the time of recruitment special care needs to be exercised to gauge the motivation factor among the prospective teachers and not focus only on their professional competence. This is the first paradigm for education in the 21st century.

Since the generation next in India is getting more and more removed from its moorings particularly in metros with both the parents taking up careers and the phenomenon of miniscule families surfacing due to obsession for privacy, resulting in the inaccessibility of the grandparents and other members of the extended family which may also be due to jobs requiring their taking to them at places removed from home and waning interest in matters religious and spiritual, it is necessary to introduce it to Indian heritage which could inculcate in it respect for elders, politeness in speech, family bondage, truthfulness, sense of gratitude, purity in conduct, responsibility towards society, forgiveness, equanimity, self-esteem but no arrogance, control over anger, greed, lustfulness and so on. A window of Indian culture needs to be opened to it so that it could familiarize itself with its core values. A basic minimum knowledge of some of the more prominent of the episodes of the Vedas and their teachings, the episodes from the *Rāmāyaṇa* and the *Hitopadeśa* is a desideratum. A course content for the purpose and the teaching of the same needs to be entrusted to competent persons. This is the second paradigm of education in the 21st century.

And last but not the least is the need for acquaintance with Sanskrit which would serve as a window to Indian culture about which I have spoken earlier. This will ensure respect for India's time-honoured cultural traditions. It is this which made master scientists like C.V. Raman and master economists like C.D. Deshmukh and V.K.R.V. Rao look different from others. This is the third paradigm for education in the 21st century.

Before I close, I would like to recount here a personal experience of mine which I had some two decades back. I had gone to Kanyakumari to see the sunrise about which I had heard so much. It was about 4.00 O'clock in the morning. I was on the sea beach eager to witness the divine sight of the sun springing forth from the sea. Heralding the sunrise there appeared redness on the horizon. As I was absorbed in the sight which was to be the feast to the eyes the strains of a Sanskrit stanza touched my ears:

udayan savitā raktaḥ rakta evāstam eti ca |
sampattau ca vipattau ca mahatām ekarūpatā ||

"When the sun rises, it is red; when it sets, it again is red. The great maintain their uniformity both in prosperity and adversity."

I looked around to see as to who had uttered it and in such impeccable accent! I noticed a group of young men by my side. On enquiry they pointed to a young man among them who told me on a further query that he was an engineer with Bharat Heavy Electrical Ltd., Bhopal and had come to Kanyakumari to see the spectacle of sunrise as had I. He further said that he had learnt the stanza in his school from his Pandit Ji, the Sanskrit teacher. And when he was face to face with the spectacle the stanza had by itself come out of him. This incident convinced me of the role that Sanskrit can play in the cultural renaissance of India. It is not that everybody has to be a scholar of Sanskrit but some acquaintance with it at some stage does impact the psyche. Some *subhāṣitas*, some episodes from the vast storehouse of Sanskrit literature would definitely shape the personality of a person. To reorient our education in that perspective is the need of the hour which will go a long way to strengthen the third paradigm of education in the 21st century's cultural regeneration.

Mṛcchakaṭika—A Reassessment

Introductory

Sanskrit dramaturgists list ten varieties of play, Rūpaka as they call it. Of these it is the Nāṭaka variety which has been widely pursued. The next in frequency is the Nāṭikā variety. Still next is the Prakaraṇa variety to which the *Mṛcchakaṭika* belongs. Its lesser pursuit probably was due to its inordinate length. It has got to have ten Acts with varied sentiments and characters. Out of the few Prakaraṇas available in extant Sanskrit literature the *Mṛcchakaṭika* stands out as a category in itself being the only social play of its type. Its main theme is the love affair between a courtesan and a Brahmin merchant reduced to utmost penury, thanks to his overindulgence in munificence. In between are thrown up to form its social mosaic gamblers, thieves, the go-betweens and a sustained dose of political intrigue.

The Author

The very start of the play is curious. It opens with a statement about its author who on reaching up to the age of hundred years and ten days had entered into fire: *labdhvā cāyuh śatābdaṁ daśadinasahitam śūdrako 'gnim praviṣṭaḥ*, prompting the scholarly community to scurry for discovering its real author, because of the impossibility of the author, as recorded in the Prologue, speaking of his own death. Notwithstanding this impossibility in popular perception, he, Śūdraka, is its author. Who he was and in which period he flourished would continue to occupy the attention of scholars as it has done over the past century or so.

Inaugural Address at the National Seminar on "*Mṛcchakaṭika* : Reassessment in 21st Century", The Asiatic Society, Kolkata, January 5, 2005. Chair : Prof. Biswanath Banerji, President of the Society.

Poetic Flashes

While the greatness of this mythical Śūdraka as a playwright is beyond question, he having evolved a play out of a mosaic of conflicting situations with unflagging interest, his greatness as a poet has not met with as much notice of connoisseurs as it should have. An instance *par excellence* of this is his description in Act V of a rainy day with sky overcast with as many as forty different similes, fancies and metaphors, perhaps the largest number, for the description of a given phenomenon in the entire range of Sanskrit literature. The clouds of the day are compared to the hearts of separated women: *viyuktavanitāhṛdayānukārāḥ*¹, they are as dark as the lordly elephants: *gajendramalinaiḥ*² or the wet Tamāla leaves: *ārdratāmālapatramalinaiḥ*³ or the herd of buffaloes: *mahiṣakulanīlaiḥ*⁴ or the dark snakes: *nīlaiḥ sāndram ivāhibhir jaladharaiḥ*⁵ or a parasol-like canopy for the world, *jaladacchatrāpidhānam*⁶. They rush against each other like elephants *gajā ivānyonyam abhidravantaḥ*⁷. With their thunder jump up the peacocks which appear fanning the sky with their spread out plumage: *yeṣāṃ raveṇa sahasotpatitair mayūraiḥ khaṁ vījyate*⁸. They envelop the moon as do the men who bring disgrace to their families, the renunciation, Saṁnyāsa: *saṁnyāsaḥ kuladūṣaṇair iva janair meghair vṛtaś candramāḥ*⁹. The lightning in them is like a woman of low family who does not stay at one place : *vidyun nīcakulodgateva yuvatir naikatra santiṣṭhate*¹⁰. It also serves as a golden torch for scouting the palaces: *kāñcanadīpikēva racitā prāsādasāñcārīṇī*¹¹. The cloud is looked upon as king whose showers are its arrows which on account of their white colour appear bejewelled: *dhārāpātair maṇimayaśaraiḥ*¹². Since a king is to have a flag, it is the lightning which serves as the same for the cloud king. The cranes are this king's white turban and the lightning the chowrie. The condition of the sky at the time the playwright describes with an unmatched chain of fancies:

vidyudbhir jvalatīva khaṁ vihasatīvoccair balākāṣatair
māhendreṇa vivalgatīva dhanuṣā dhārāśarodgārīṇāi
vispaśāṣaniniḥsavanena rasatīvāghhūrṇatīvānilair
nīlaiḥ sāndram ivāhibhir jaladharair

‘The sky is as if blazing owing to lightning flashes, as if laughing boisterously owing to hundreds of cranes, as if galloping about owing to Indra’s rainbow discharging arrows in the form of showers, as if shouting up owing to the very distinct noise of thunder, as if reeling due to winds and as if throwing incense densely owing to the dark snake-like clouds.’

Even outside of this lengthy description which in volume and innovation in going in for divining appropriate standards of comparison, almost a feat indeed, his similes and metaphors have freshness and novelty about them. His stanza

*limpatīva tamo 'ṅgāni varṣatīvāñjanam nabhaḥ|
asatpuruṣaseveva dr̥ṣṭir viphalatām gatā||*

in describing the pitch darkness clinging to (lit. besmearing) the limbs as it were and giving the appearance of the sky showering forth collyrium leading to the failure of the eyesight—and here comes the most unusual of the similes—like the service to a bad person, is well-known enough. Equally well-known are his other stanzas or prose passages like *sukham hi duḥkḥāny anubhūya śobhate ghanāndhakāreṣv iva dīpadarśanam*¹⁶, “happiness indeed shines after experience of miseries like the sight of a lamp in the midst of pitch darkness” occurring in the context of Cārudatta running down his poverty which has striking parallel in Kālidāsan statement *yad evopanatam duḥkhāt sukham tad rasavattaram*

(Vikramorvaśīya, III.21)

or *chidreṣv anarthā bahulībhavanti*¹⁷

“troubles multiply at weak points” occurring in the context of evidence after evidence going against Cārudatta or *ayaṁ paṭaḥ saṁvṛta eva śobhate*,¹⁸ “this cloth looks good when folded only” occurring in the context of the gambler Darduraka trying to hide himself from his colleague Sabhika by covering himself with an upper garment but not able to do so for its having gone into tatters or *sāhase śrīḥ prativasati*,¹⁹ “fortune favours the brave” occurring in the context of Śarvilaka’s rejoinder to his lady love Madanikā for his having attempted a rash deed or *niśāyām naṣṭacandrāyām durlabho mārgadarśakaḥ*,²⁰ “in the night with no moon it is hard to get one who can show the way” occurring in the context of Śarvilaka appreciating Madanikā’s suggestion to return the bunch

of stolen ornaments to Cārudatta by posing as one of his kin, have become household words in Sanskrit. Nothing can be more creditable for the playwright than the fact that one of his stanzas

*ālāne grhyate hastī vājī valgāsu grhyate |
hrdaye grhyate nārī yady etan nāsti gamyatām!*²¹

“an elephant is held by the tying chain, a horse by the reins, a woman by the heart. If you do not have this, then just get off” has been adopted as such by Viṣṇuśarman in his *Pañcatantra*.

The playwright is expert in delineating a phenomenon in all its repercussions. See what happens to a person when he turns poor:

*dāridryāt puruṣaṣya bāndhavajano vākye na santiṣṭhate
susnigdhā vimukhībhavanti suhrdaḥ sphārībhavanty
āpadaḥ |
sattvaṃ hrāsam upaiti śīlaśaśinaḥ kāntiḥ parimlāyate
pāpaṃ karma ca yat parair api kṛtaṃ tat tasya
sambhāvyate!*²²

“Owing to poverty a man’s relatives do not stand up to or act up to his words, extremely intimate friends turn their faces away, the troubles multiply, the spirit gets low, the lustre of the moon of good character fades away, whatever sin others have committed is ascribed to him”.

*saṅgam naiva ca kaścid asya kurute sambhāṣate nādarāt
samprāpto grham utsaveṣu dhanināṃ sāvajñam ālokyate |
dūrād eva mahājanasya viharaty alpachhado lajjayā
manye nirdhanatā prakāmaṃ aparaṃ ṣaṣṭhaṃ
mahāpātakam!*²³

“ ‘Nobody associates with him, nor talks to him respectfully, feeling shy, he in scanty clothes keeps a distance from big people, the rich men look at him with disdain on occasions of festivities in their houses. Poverty is the sixth big sin’.” How life-like it is! The playwright has drawn a real sketch of the kind of experience a poor man has to undergo in life.

Vocabulary

It would be good to take a break from here and to pass on to the vocabulary. Since the playwright has to describe people in

different vocations he permits himself the use of words going well with them, the words like *gaṇḍa* for pledge, the gambler Sabhika asks the loser Saṁvāhaka who expresses his inability to pay up the ten Suvarṇas that he is to pay: *are gaṇḍam kuru kuru*²⁴, *pratipurūṣa* for a dummy, Śarvilaka uses the word after breaking in Cārudatta's house to check whether the two men are feigning sleep or not: *pratipurūṣam niveśayāmi*²⁵, I send in the dummy; for feigning the sleep he uses the word *lakṣyasupta*²⁶ in contrast to really asleep for which he has the word *paramārthasupta*. He has the device called *āgneya kīṭa*²⁷, the fire insect which can extinguish fire with its wings. In the gamblers' scene a number of words relevant to the game of dice are used. One such is *pāṭha* in the sense of turn, *mama pāṭhaḥ mama pāṭhaḥ*²⁸, it is my turn, it is my turn, the gamblers quarrel among themselves about their turn. The other word is *kattā*, the sound of the throwing of the dice: *kattāśabdo mano harati*²⁹.

Still other words are *tretā* the Tray, *pāvāra* the Deuce, *nardita* the Ace and *kaṭa* the Four:

Dardurakaḥ— *tretāhṛtasarvasvaḥ pāvarapatanāc ca
śoṣitaśarīraḥ*

narditadarśitamārgaḥ kaṭena vinipātito yāmi||³⁰

The other peculiar words are *vyāghārīta*³¹, fried, occurring in the speech of Śākāra which shows the origin of the much used Hindi word, *baghār*; *bhojaka*, dignitary occurring in the Śākāra's address *aho adhikaraṇabhōjakāḥ*³², O the court dignitaries; *vadhyapālikā*, the turn to kill occurring in the context of the Cāṇḍālas who clamour to claim turn in Cārudatta's execution: *aye mamātra vadhyapālikā (mama vadhyapālikā)*³³; *dvārbbhāva*³⁴ in the sense of means occurring in the context of the judge describing his duties: *dvārbbhāve paratattvabaddhahṛdayaḥ*.

The playwright seems to have a liking for certain words. One such is *kalyavarta* in the sense of trifle, bagatelle which is used seven times in the play in different contexts and with reference to different objects; in the context of quarrel between the gamblers where one of them Darduraka intending to assist the loser Saṁvāhaka speaks of the ten *suvarṇas* as just *kalyavarta* to which the other gambler, Sabhika, the winner, objects, *nanu daśasuvarṇam kalyavartam bhaṇati*³⁵; in the context of Madanikā—*strīkalyavartasya kāraṇena ubhayaṁ api saṁśaye nīkṣiptam*³⁶,

Cārudatta murdering Vasantasenā for the sake of a little money, *arthakalyavartasya kāraṇāt*³⁷ and so on.

The word *droṇa* occurs twice in the play, first in the company of *megha*³⁸ and the other time in that of *vṛṣṭi*³⁹, the occasion being the sudden unexpected fulsome help at the last moment. *Droṇa* is explained on the authority of texts on Astronomy as the cloud that fills the crops: *droṇaḥ sasyaprapūrahakḥ*:

*āvarto nirjalo meghaḥ saṁvartaś ca bahūdakaḥ
puṣkaro duṣkarajalo droṇaḥ sasyaprapūrahakḥ*||

A few more noticeable words over here. *Khaṭikriyate* the play uses in the sense of crushed, ill-treated: *ayaṁ dyūtakaraḥ sabhikena khaṭikriyate*.⁴⁰ *Samsthāpanā* in it means consolation: *saṁsthāpanā priyatamā virahāturaṇām*⁴¹. The derivatives from √*duṣ* like *dūṣaṇa*, *dūṣita* are used in a variety of meanings far removed from each other. At one place *dūṣaṇa* has the meaning of breaking in, burglary: *paragrhādūṣaṇaniścitaikavīram*⁴², at another place of imputing a motive: *Adhikaraṇikaḥ—grahaṇam cānilasyeva cārudattasya dūṣaṇam*⁴³. *Dūṣita* in one place means apprehensive: *Cārudattaḥ—prabhavati yadi dharmo dūṣitasyāpi me 'dya*⁴⁴, at another place loosened: *dūṣiteyaṁ bhūmiḥ kṣāraḥṣiṇā*⁴⁵ and at still another place contaminated, soiled and tarnished: *śareṇeva viṣāktena dūṣitenāsmi dūṣitaḥ*⁴⁶, *kevalam dūṣitam yaśaḥ*⁴⁷

It will be a good idea if some younger scholars were to take up the linguistic appraisal of the play under the guidance of a senior one. It will be a rewarding study indeed, not undertaken so far. Too much has been written on topics like the date and the author of the work or its characters or the state of the society and culture depicted in it. But the study in areas like its in-depth linguistic and stylistic analysis still remains a desideratum.

Word-pictures

Whenever the playwright is to describe a particular event he goes on all fours to sketch it in all its decibels, be it gambling, theft or court trial or execution. He likes to make his spectators or readers to have a full view of it in all its details. How the gamblers gamble, how the loser dodges the winner, how he tries to outmanoeuvre him, how he is caught and thrashed, how even though in hiding he finds

the sound of the throw of the dice irresistible, how his companion out to help quarrels with the one chasing him and in the course of that throws dust in his eyes, and provides an opportunity to his friend to slip away. The entire scene is captured as such. The same is the case with the court scene. An employee cleans the court-room, arranges the seats. Enters the judge, the Adhikaraṇika, together with the Assessors, the Śreṣṭhin and the Kāyastha. Call is given to the plaintiffs to file their suit. The case is argued, the person charged with crime is questioned, the witnesses are called for and are cross-examined, and the judgement delivered subject to its ratification by the final arbiter, the king. It is interesting to note from the words of the judge as to the kind of people he has to deal with, the people who hide truth, who when provoked would admit to crime, the people who though good otherwise would utter half truth—a situation that has remarkable similarity with the one prevailing in courts in India in the present time. That the judiciary in the time of the playwright was not free from the influence of the executive is also hinted at. The judge initially is not in a mood to hear the case of Śākāra under the apprehension that it could be a complicated one and says that his case cannot be taken up. But when he (Śākāra) threatens to report against him to the king, he yields and agrees to admit the case.

Coming to the theft scene, we find that it is depicted in the play step by step. It is early hours. The thief Śarvilaka makes a breach in the fencing wall of the grove of trees round the house of Cārudatta and enters the middle region. He has now to break through to reach the inner quadrangle and has then to look for a place which may drown the sound of his footsteps, where the earth would be loose due to the sprinkling of water, a wide breach in the wall not noticeable to others, the brick masonry less strong with the corrosion of salt petre and with no woman around. As a good sign for him he finds the earth loose and a pile of rubbish drawn out by the mice. Since there are baked bricks in the walls, he has no option except to pull them out. His sacred thread he uses as a measuring tape for the hole to be carved out. With only one brick left a snake bites his finger. His sacred thread again comes to his rescue. He ties the finger with it to avoid the poison spreading in the body. He comes to the quadrangle but the door through which he is to pass now being old,

screeches. He first thinks of sprinkling water on it to silence the screeching but finds it inadvisable for the sound it may generate if splashed. He then waits outside the door and finding two persons inside asleep first wants to make sure as to whether they are actually asleep or feigning it. He sends in a dummy first. He finds in the quadrangle only musical instruments inferring thereby that the owner of the house is poor. But he has to make sure that he is really so and has no wealth buried underground. For this he adopts the tactic of scattering magical seeds. Their not expanding convinces him that the owner is really poor. At this crucial moment the dream speech of the jester in which he requests sleeping Cārudatta to take possession of the bunch of gold ornaments makes him take possession of them and decamp.

The entire scene shows the playwright's intimate acquaintance with the methods, the means and the strategy of the thieves or the art of theft, if it can be called as such. Interestingly, there are patron deities for such activities like Kumāra Kārtikeya to whom prayers are offered before undertaking them or at the end when the mission is successful. The thieves call themselves Skandaputras, the sons of Skanda: *prathamam etat skandaputrāṇām siddhilakṣaṇam*⁴⁸. It is a matter of investigation as to how Skanda came to be associated with such nefarious activities. Further, the thief refers to certain *ācāryas*, the authorities on the art like Kanakaśakti who have recorded four types of burglary, the Sandhi-bhedas, the pulling out of the baked bricks, the cutting through of the unbaked ones, the sprinkling of those made of earth clods and chipping of those of made of wood. The other *ācāryas* referred to are Bhāskaranandin and Yogācārya. The latter the thief claims as his teacher who has given him a magic ointment which would render him invisible to police and make him immune to attack by a weapon:

*namo nārādāya kumārakārttikeyāya, namaḥ kanakaśaktaye
brahmaṇya-devāya, devavratāya, namo bhāskaranandine,
namo yogācāryāya yasyāhaṁ prathamah śiṣyaḥ
tena ca parituṣṭena yogarocanā me dattā
anayā hi samālabdham na mām draṁsyanti rakṣiṇaḥ
śastraṁ ca patitaṁ gātre rujaṁ notpādayiṣyati*⁴⁹

For a thief even the symbol of Brahminhood, the sacred thread is a means for the accomplishment of his mission: *yajñopavītaṁ hi*

*nāma brāhmaṇasya mahad upakaraṇadravyam, viśeṣato 'smadvidhasya.*⁵⁰

The playwright's penchant for detail and drawing of word pictures is noticeable in his description of the mansion of Vasāntasenā with its fabulous eight quadrangles where each and every object gets a minute notice in a style reminiscent of that of Bāṇa. That such a rich courtesan should have fallen in love with poor Cārudatta (with his house with screeching doors and plaster worn off and with his son playing with a clay cart) is a contrast which the playwright only was capable of conjuring up. There is *dvandva* here, the *dvandva* between affluence and penury, between a handsome and pious but a pauper merchant and a fabulously rich courtesan. It is again a contrast that a cowherd boy takes over the reins of the kingdom by deposing the ruler and one who was waiting for the final blow on him becoming a ruler of the part of the kingdom. It is all a contrast, the *dvandva*, which lends the *Mṛcchakaṭika* a character unique in the annals of India's and perhaps the world's dramatic literature.

The playwright has an uncanny insight into human psychology: How even lowly persons can exhibit noble tendencies in certain situations much against the spirit of their calling. It is the force of their heart that transforms them to attempt to turn a new leaf. Śarvilaka is so attached to Madanikā that he wants to rescue her from serfdom—though in the process he has to stoop to even stealing. What is noteworthy here is the motive and not the act itself. Śarvilaka is a thief, living by theft, he turns to theft to free his lady love from the bondage of slavery, a noble deed indeed, though sought to be achieved by ignoble means, a symptom of contradictions in life, something that is a fact of it. Vasāntasenā is a courtesan but much against the spirit of her calling falls in for Cārudatta by the sheer pull of his qualities. His magnanimity to the point of reducing himself to penury is the magnet for her. At this point she is just a lady love and not a courtesan. Anything or any being belonging to her paramour she owns. Since Rohasena is Cārudatta's son, she has to have pity on him. She takes off her ornaments to enable him to acquire a golden cart when she notices him pining for it finding it with the child of another wealthier merchant and not willing to play with a clay cart, the *mṛcchakaṭika*—the incident which has provided

the title to the play—which is a fine psychological study in capturing beings in their genuine moral form different from the one which they have to keep up in public.

Psycho-analysis

The play shows its composer a good psychologist. In most of the situations he depicts the inner conflict raging in the minds of the characters. This is so with Śarvilaka out to commit theft, with the gamblers out to play the game of dice, the mother of Vasantasenā in the act of identifying the ornaments in the court, the judge trying Cārudatta and the Cāṇḍālas preparing to executing him. Every one of them is conscious of the lowly nature and the impropriety of the work he is doing or is called upon to do and still engaging himself or herself in it. This is the inner conflict, the *antardvandva* which the playwright has effectively portrayed. Śarvilaka, a Brahmin, is conscious of the high traditions of his family:

*aham hi caturvedavido 'pratigrāhakasya putraḥ śarvilako
nāma brāhmaṇaḥ!*

Madanikāgaṇikārtham akāryam anuṭiṣṭhāmi...

*kaṣṭam evaṁ madanikāgaṇikārthe brāhmaṇakulam tamasi
pātitam, athavā ātmā pātitaḥ!*⁵¹

*dhig astu khalu dāridryam anirveditapauruṣam!
yad etad garhitam karma nindāmi ca karomi ca!*⁵²

In the gamblers scene Darduraka's words, though ostensibly uttered in praise of gambling, do betray a streak of aversion for it: *sarvaṁ naṣṭam dyūtenaiva*.⁵³

The judge trying Cārudatta rues his calling in having to try a person of the qualities and calibre of Cārudatta. He has to cross-examine him. That is the legal procedure. But mark the agony of his words: *nanu vyavahāras tvām prcchati*⁵⁴. His heart sinks when evidence mounts against him. He has to sentence a person whom he adores. He dilutes his judgement on the plea of his (Cārudatta's) being a Brahmin. He awards him only exile even for the crime of murder with which he is charged and which is proved by all the evidence available. It is a different matter that the king to whom the case is referred for final adjudication alters the judgement and awards death penalty. Even the Cāṇḍālas take long to carry out

the execution. It is clear that in their heart of hearts they do not want to kill Cārudatta. One of them gives a poignant expression to his feelings when he asks people to get away and not to have a look at a good man losing his life with the simile of the golden pitcher sinking with its rope gone asunder which could not be more telling. Their reluctance to carry out the ghastly act is also manifest in the time they take to carry it out. They talk among themselves. When one of them refers to Cārudatta without an honorific, the other objects: *āryacārudattaṃ nirupapadena nāmnā 'lapasi*.⁵⁵ He even goes to the extent of saying that even though born in the Cāṇḍāla family they are not Cāṇḍālas. Cāṇḍālas are they, implicating obliquely the judiciary and the monarchy, who ill-treat a good man. It is obvious from this as to how painful it was for the executioners to carry out the execution. It is a cry of anguish on their part when they say *atra rājaniyogaḥ khalv aparādhyati*⁵⁶, the order of the master is at fault, *aparādhyati*, here. The execution of Cārudatta is an *aparādha* even for the executioners! It was for no reason that the sword drawn by one of them to kill Cārudatta had missed the mark.

Playwright's knowledge of other Disciplines

The playwright had a good grasp of the various disciplines like music, the science of omens and so on. The knowledge of music is noticeable in Cārudatta's appreciation of the singing of Rebhila which is described as impassioned and sweet, smooth and distinct and full of emotion as also charming and attractive and is characterized by sweet voice, harmonized notes of the lute, high pitches, mingled with different Mūrchanās, even on syllables, low at the close, controlled with utmost ease and repeated twice in consonance with the Rāga.

Through his foolish statements even Śakāra gives expression to the belief of the time to the means which could impart melodiousness to voice. There were certain herbal preparations for this like the cuming seed and orris root brightened with Hingu and the root of Vacā as well as ginger with jaggery or dishes like that of the cuckoo meat brightened with Hingu and a dash of Marica powder fried and mixed with oil and *ghee* which could bring it about:

*bhuktāṃ mayā pārabhṛtīyamāṃsaṃ katham nāhaṃ
madhurasvara itih*⁵⁷

The knowledge and belief in omens has evidence for it in the throbbing of the right arm, *spandate dakṣiṇo bhujah*⁵⁸ of Āryaka, a good omen for men, getting sword from Candanaka out to inspect the vehicle and that of the throbbing of the left eye of Cārudatta, a bad omen, when he gets a call from the court, *savyam me spandate cakṣuḥ*⁵⁹, the other bad omens noticed by him being the harsh notes of a crow perched on a dried up tree in the direction of the sun and a coiled cobra blocking his path. The judge in the court being told that the king's brother-in-law has come to file a suit considers it a bad omen corroborating it with the mundane phenomenon of the eclipse at the very sunrise indicating the downfall of a great man: *Adhikaraṇikaḥ—katham prathamam eva rāṣṭriyaśyālah kāryārthī? yathā sūryodaya uparāgo mahāpuruṣanipātam eva kathayati*⁶⁰ And that is precisely what happens. Cārudatta is charged with the heinous crime of murdering Vasantasenā and is sentenced to death.

Acquaintance with Regional Practices

While going through the play one cannot but be struck with the playwright's intimate acquaintance with certain habits associated with certain regions of the country. After the royal command consequent upon the escape of Āryaka that each and every vehicle is to be inspected, a covered carriage passing through the main road is first inspected by Captain Candanaka. Finding Āryaka therein he, out to help him, tells the other Captain Viraka that it carries Vasantasenā but his demeanour and his flip-flop with the word *ārya* and *aryā* arouse suspicion in him with the result that he wants to carry out the inspection himself to which the former objects. As for his flip-flop he has the explanation that he being a southerner is indistinct in his speech: *vayam dākṣiṇātyā avyaktabhāṣiṇaḥ*⁶¹.

He then comes out with a lengthy list of languages and dialects he knows and is free to use any expression. With the possibility of being cornered, with Viraka still insistent, he thinks of the device of picking up quarrel in the line of the people of Karṇāṭaka: *karṇāṭakalahaprayogaṁ karomi*⁶² which according to Srinivasacharya is *śuṣkakalaha*, picking up a quarrel for no reason. The Kannadigas might have had this habit during the playwright's time. CC-0. Prof. Satya Vrat Shastri Collection, New Delhi. Digitized by eGangotri

Quaint Ideas

The playwright also seems to have strange ideas about the use of Sanskrit. Women using it he does not seem to appreciate as can be inferred from the words of the Vidūṣaka:

*mama tāvad dvābhyām eva hāsyam jāyate—striyā
saṁskṛtaṁ paṭhantī manuṣyeṇa ca kākālīm
gāyatā stri tāvat saṁskṛtaṁ paṭhanti
dattanavanasyeva adhikaṁ sūsūśabdaṁ karoti*⁶³

“For my part two things make me laugh: a woman reading Sanskrit and a man singing Kākālī. A woman reading Sanskrit aloud like a young cow having a new rope passed through her nostrils makes too much of *sū sū* sound.”

Special Features of the Play

The special features of the *Mṛcchakaṭika* which have received notice of scholars are the plethora of characters from all walks of life, high and low, noble and ignoble, polite and impolite, pious and impious and the number of Prakrits, as many as eight indicating the proficiency of the playwright in all of them.

SOCIETY AND CULTURE

Caste and Profession : Liberality of Approach

The *Mṛcchakaṭika* depicts a kind of society which had certain peculiarities that distinguish it from the traditional type. Let us take up the caste system first. The hero of the play Cārudatta is a Brahmin by caste and a merchant by profession with his house in the quarters of the merchants, *śreṣṭhicatvara*.⁶⁴ He does not hold on to the traditional Brahmin profession of a priest or of a teacher. In the time of the *Mṛcchakaṭika* caste was no barrier to the rise of a person to a higher position even if belonging to a low caste, as is clear from the fake quarrel that Candanaka picks up with Vīraka in the incident of inspecting a carriage. Both are police captains, called Senāpatīs in the play. While one of them is from a barber community, the other one belongs to the community of shoe-makers. Both of them run down each other on the basis of their low caste which their quarrel reveals. Sarvilaka who engages himself in burglary and boasts of

his skill in breaking into the houses is a Brahmin by caste. He has no qualms in using his sacred thread, *yajñopavīta*, the symbol of his Brahminhood as the measuring tape⁶⁵ for making a hole in the wall as also as a bandage for snake-bitten finger. His Brahminhood is awakened when the Vidūṣaka in the dream-speech asks Cārudatta to take possession of the bunch of gold ornaments to relieve him of the worry of its safe keeping. He first is prompted to take hold of it but desists from it saying that it is not proper to harass a nobly born person who is in similar circumstances: *gr̥hṇāmi athavā na yuktam tulyāvastham kulaputrajanaṁ pīdayitum, tad gacchāmi*.⁶⁶

It is only when the Vidūṣaka says that he would be cursed if he were not to take possession of the bunch of ornaments in the name of the wish of the cows and the Brahmins, *bho vayasya! śāpito 'si gobrāhmaṇakāmyayā yady etat suvarṇabhāṇḍam na gr̥hṇāsi*⁶⁷, that he turns to taking hold of the ornaments: *anatikramaṇīyā bhagavatī gokāmyā brāhmaṇakāmyā ca*⁶⁸, the cow-wish and the Brahmin-wish are not to be transgressed. So I take this.

Coming to the last Act of the play we find even the Cāṇḍālas saying that they are Cāṇḍālas because they are born in the Cāṇḍāla family. Actually the Cāṇḍālas are those who punish a noble person like Cārudatta. And finally, and that is the last blow on the caste system, it is a cowherd boy, *gopāladāraka*, who deposes the ruling king and taking over the kingdom from him shares a part of it with Brahmin Cārudatta. In his escape from the prison, it is Candanaka, a cobbler by caste, who had helped him by concealing his identity at the time of the inspection of the carriage and by handing over a sword to him. The carriage having reached the house of Cārudatta for which it was meant; it was supposed to be carrying Vasantasenā who was heading for that but had boarded another carriage mistakenly as had Aryaka; it is the latter, Cārudatta, a Brahmin, who assures him when he takes refuge with him of having no fear from him, *abhayaṁ śaraṇāgatasya*.⁶⁹ It is he who has fetters from his foot removed and advises him for fear of being detected to move on with the same carriage.

The sum total of the discussion only leads to the point with which we had started that in the *Mṛcchakaṭika* people belonging to any caste, high or low, were free to choose for themselves any profession they liked. The people of low caste were not eternally

condemned to follow the vocations of their caste. And vice versa. That does not mean that the caste system did not exist or was any the less rigid. The Śūdras were not allowed to recite the Vedas. The judge reprimands Śākāra when he accuses him of partiality, *kiṃ pakṣapālena vyavahāro drśyate*⁷⁰. The judge gets furious and says *Vedārthān prākṛtas tvam vadasi na ca te jihvā nipatitā*,⁷¹ a low caste fellow, you are talking of the sense of the Vedas, yet your tongue has not fallen off. In the court the Kāyastha was the Assessor along with the Śreṣṭhin but his standing in society did not elicit respect. He was compared to a snake. The court is *kāyasthasarpāspadam*.⁷²

As for a customary rule the Brahmins were not to be awarded capital punishment. They were *avadhyas* even if having committed heinous crimes like murder. The judge after hearing the case and finding Cārudatta guilty of the murder of Vasantasenā on the basis of the evidence available awards, quoting Manu, the punishment of banishment from the country with all possessions intact:

*ayam hi pātakī vipro na vadhyo manur abravīt
rāṣṭrād asmāt tu nirvāsyo vibhavair akṣataiḥ saha*⁷³

It is a different matter that the king did not uphold the judgement and altered it to capital punishment for which he drew from Cārudatta the censure of being thoughtless: *aho avimṛśyakārī rājā pālakaḥ*.⁷⁴

Interestingly, a person of the high caste, a Brahmin for instance, even though engaging himself in the most lowly and despicable act of burglary was conscious of his high birth: *aham hi caturvedavido 'pratigrāhakasya putraḥ śarvilako nāma*.⁷⁵

That was perhaps the reason that the noble streak coming from his family did not completely forsake him even there. He reassures Madanikā when she gets alarmed at his speaking of committing a rash act that he does not rob a woman with ornaments like a creeper in blossom, nor does he take away the possessions of a Brāhmin amassed for the sake of sacrifice, nor does he carry a child from the lap of a nurse. Even in the matter of stealing he exercises his judgement as to what should be done and what not:

*no muṣṇāmy abalām vibhūṣaṇavatīm phullām ivāham latām
viprasvam na harāmi kāñcanam atho yajñārtham
abhyuddhrtam*

*dhātryutsaṁgagataṁ harāmi na tathā bālāṁ dhanārthī
kvacit*

*kāryākāryavicāriṇī mama matiś caurye 'pi nityaṁ sthitā*⁷⁶

Possibility of Redemption of the Fallen

Now, the spotlight is to be shifted to another interesting aspect of the *Mṛcchakaṭika*. In its time a courtesan or a prostitute had a chance to be redeemed and, once fallen, was not to remain condemned or confined to that profession for ever, the society not accepting her in the family fold. Śarvilaka steals ornaments to buy freedom for Madanikā. Vasantasenā marks her look as she is engaged in a talk with him and infers from that that he is the same person who wants to make her a free woman: *sa jana etām icchaty abhujīṣyām kartum*⁷⁷.

After she is freed, she is accepted as a bride:

Śarvilakaḥ—*sudṛṣṭaḥ kriyatām eṣa śirasā vandyatām janahī
yatra te durlabhaṁ prāptaṁ vadhūśabdāvagunṭhanam*⁷⁸

She has got the title of *vadhū* which is difficult to secure. As was Madanikā accepted as *vadhū* so was Vasantasenā herself: Śarvilakaḥ—*Vasantasene! parituṣṭo rājā bhavatīm vadhūśabdenānugrhnāti*,⁷⁹ the king (it is Cārudatta who is styled here as such since he was made the ruler of Kuśāvati by Āryaka on ascension to the throne by deposing Pālaka) highly pleased [with you] favours you with the title of *vadhū* [a lawfully wedded wife]. She is offered by Śarvilaka to Cārudatta with the veil on, in the style of a *vadhū*: *vasantasenām avagunṭhya cārudattaṁ prati*⁸⁰.

Even the prostitutes and courtezans in the time of the *Mṛcchakaṭika* could become *vadhūs*, the legally wedded wives!

Custom of Satī

The custom of Satī was not only prevalent in the time of the *Mṛcchakaṭika* but also glorified. The moment Dhūtā, the wife of Cārudatta, gets the news that he is to be executed, she gets ready to commit Satī. Even the consideration of the care of her son Rohasena in the absence of both the parents losing their life does not weigh with her. She tells the child who is clinging to her skirt to leave her and not come in her way: *jāta! muñca, mā vighnaṁ kuruṣva*⁸¹. She

wants to predecease Cārudatta so that she may not have to hear the unpleasant news of his death: *bibhemy āryaputrasyāmaṅgalākaraṇāṭ*⁸². She is even prepared to court the sin which as per the reproduction of the views of the sages by the Vidūṣaka, accrues if a Brahmin women were to mount the funeral pyre without the body of the husband on it: *varam pāpācaraṇam, na punar āryaputrasyāmaṅgalākaraṇam*⁸³.

The glorification of Satī comes when the release of Cārudatta from execution is attributed to the determination of the chaste wife to enter into fire: *aho satyāḥ prabhāvaḥ, yato jvalanapra-veśavyavasāyenaiva priyasamāgamam prāpita*⁸⁴.

Religions

In the time of the *Mṛcchakaṭika* the Brahmanical religion with its gods and goddesses, vows and fasts, heaven and hell and sacrificial system was prevalent. Buddhism also flourished alongside though not favourably looked upon, the sight of a Śramaṇa at the very start of an activity being considered inauspicious. There is mention in the work of the paraphernalia of the Buddhist monks, their *kaṣāya* garments, the *cīvaras*. A Bhikṣu is shown in the play to wash them and leave them on a pile of dry leaves for drying, the water dripping from them reviving Vasantasenā buried by Śākāra underneath. The Bhikṣus addressed the commoners as *buddhopāsaka* and *buddhopāsikā*. Their possessions, *daṇḍakuṇḍikābhājana* and their *Vihāras* all find accurate mention in the work. It seems the State did exercise some power in matters of appointment of religious heads as should be clear from Cārudatta's order about Sthāvaraka's appointment as chief monk of all the Vihāras in the country, Cārudattaḥ—*tat pṛthivyām sarvavihāreṣu kulapatir ayam kriyatām*.⁸⁵

Slavery

The slavery was in existence in the time of the play. The slave could be bought - Samvāhaka offers himself for sale—and could be made free on payment, unless the owner were to waive off payment as in the case of Madanikā who was made *abhujīṣyā*⁸⁶ by Vasantasenā, with no payment. The State could also grant freedom from bondage. Sthāvaraka Ceṭa was freed by Cārudatta on becoming king: *svṛṭto 'dāso bhavatu*.⁸⁷

Judicial System

Now, a word about the judicial system. There was a regular judicial procedure with the court, the judge, the assessors and a hall which provided seating arrangements. Anybody could come and file a suit. As a matter of fact, a call was given inviting people who want their cases to be heard: *kaḥ ka iha kāryārthī*. The judge was appointed by the king and held office at his pleasure, as evidenced by Śākāra episode where he, the judge, first declines to admit his case on the plea that the court programme is already crowded but relents when he, Śākāra, threatens that he would report against him to his brother-in-law, the king, and have him replaced by another judge: *yadi na dṛśyate tadāvuttamā rājānam pālakam bhaginīpatim vijñāpya etam adhikaraṇikam dūrīkṛtyātrānyam adhikaraṇikam sthāpayiṣyāmi*.⁸⁸

It was left to the discretion of the judge to summon witnesses. The evidence accruing was committed to writing. The judge was conscious of the difficulties that lay in store for him in deciding a case. People would give garbled version of the events, they would speak half-truths and so on. He would, therefore, give full opportunity to the accused to defend himself. The confession of the accused had to be secured before the judge gave his judgement. The judgement was in the nature of the recommendation to the king who was the final authority to award punishment. The king does not agree with the recommendation of the judge in the case of Cārudatta. He alters it from banishment to capital punishment, which he condemns in the strongest terms, attributing it to his bad counsellors. His condemnation is based on two scores—one, he, a Brahmin, is being killed; and two, the other procedure of putting him in the ordeal of poison, water, scale and fire was not resorted to, indicating thereby that there were other means to judge a person:

*viṣasalilatulāgniprārthite me vicāre
krakacam iha śarīre vīkṣya dātavyam adya
atha ripuvacanād vā brāhmaṇam mām nihaṁsi
patasi narakamadhye putrapautraiḥ sametaḥ*⁸⁹

A person condemned to the gallows was taken in a procession, wearing red garments, red sandal paste marks and the garland of Karavīra flowers grown in the cemetery. The occasion marked almost

like a show for the people. The criminal could be killed by the sword or impaled. The execution was carried out by Cāṇḍālas, the hangmen.

As would appear from the above, the *Mṛcchakaṭika* is a good mirror to the society of its times to some aspects of which attention has been drawn here.

NOTE

The study is based on the *Mṛcchakaṭika*, Bharatiya Vidya Prakashan, Varanasi, Delhi 1993.

Time has moved on. From the 6th or the 7th Century A.D. it has passed into the 21st century. But the human society has basically remained the same with its finer and baser instincts with their inevitable contradictions. It is not all roses with no thorns. It is not all good with no evil. As a matter of fact, how can one know what is good if there were no evil. How could one appreciate Kṛṣṇa if there were no Kāṁsa? How could one appreciate Rāma if there were no Rāvaṇa?

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11. V. 20
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16. I. 10

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41. II. 3
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46. X. 28
47. X. 27
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Contribution of Bhagavān Vālmīki to Welfare of Society

Bhagavān Vālmīki, the foremost of the poets, *vṛṣabhaḥ kavīnam*, is credited with the authorship of two *Rāmāyaṇas*, one the *Rāmāyāṇa* that goes with his name, the Vālmīki *Rāmāyaṇa* and the other, the *Yogavāsīṣṭha Mahārāmāyaṇa*. The first describes the life story of Śrī Rāma, the ideal king who on account of his myriad qualities has come to be accepted as one of the incarnations of Lord Viṣṇu and the other reproduces the instruction of the sage Vasiṣṭha to Rāma to lift him up from the stage of depression and sadness to which he had sunken. Both these *Rāmāyaṇas* with their elevating themes have a message for humanity. *Rāmāyaṇa* is a combination of two words, *Rāma* and *ayana*. *Ayana* means path. It is the same *ayana* that is found in such words as *Dakṣiṇāyana*, *Uttarāyana*. The path of Rāma is so uplifting that in its own interest humanity needs to follow it. It represents the victory of good over bad, virtue over vice, piety over sin. From what happens ultimately to bad, vice and sin, humanity has itself to deduce as to how it has to conduct itself if it were not to invite ruin and destruction. By placing before the people the narrative of Śrī Rāma, Bhagavān Vālmīki has shown them the path that they need to follow if they have to survive and prosper. It was for his concern for their welfare that he chose to narrate the story of Rāma in his *Rāmāyaṇa* and to uplift it from its state of despair that he chose to compose the *Yagavāsīṣṭhamahārāmāyaṇa*.

Man is an animal is a well-known saying. It is the inculcation of *dharma* in him that transforms him from his primary state of an animal to that of an improved state of a human being. According to an old Sanskrit stanza it is the *dharma* that is something extra that the human beings have from the animals, *dharmaḥ tu teṣāṃ adhiko viśeṣaḥ*; those who do not have it are

like animals, *dharmeṇa hīnāḥ paśubhiḥ samānāḥ*. Now, the question is what the *dharma* is. It is defined variously in ancient texts. All told, it is a set of ethical principles that need to be observed to impart fitness to people to make them responsible and useful members of society. It is such people who lend cohesion to it and provide it sustenance.

Since man is a social animal, he has to have a society where he can function. He cannot live in isolation. Even the seers and sages have to have *Āśramas*, hermitages to lead a corporate life. The *Āśramas* are to be in forests or places away from cities and towns to enable hermits to practice meditation or engage in other spiritual pursuits or study and teaching undisturbed. Not that they were all celibates and recluses. Some of them would even marry and beget children. For the ordinary people the first unit of society was and still is the family. As member of the family a human being has his obligation to other members of it, to his brother/s, sister/s, father, mother, uncle/s and aunt/s and so on. Bhagavān Vālmīki through his narrative of Rāma has tried to show the model relationship that should subsist between the members of a family. Rāma belonged to a family where the three of his other siblings were not his real brothers. Born of other mothers they were the step-brothers. Still they were passionately attached to each other. Lakṣmaṇa insisted on accompanying Rāma to the forest though it was not he who was asked to go to it and suffer all the hardships. Bharata on coming to know of the exile of Rāma felt extremely bad and went out of his way to go to Citrakūṭa to persuade him to come back and assume the reins of the kingdom and on his not agreeing to it brought back with him his sandals that he put on the throne. He governed the kingdom from outside the capital city of Ayodhyā in the dress of a mendicant waiting all the fourteen years to return it to him who according to him was its rightful owner with the proclaimed intent of ending his life if by any chance this were not to happen. When Śatrughna goes out to subdue the demon Lavaṇa, Rāma provides him with the army and other necessities and instructs him as to how he is to conduct himself in the battle. By depicting the life of Rāma, Lakṣmaṇa, Bharata and Śatrughna Bhagavān Vālmīki has shown

as to the kind of relationship that should subsist between a brother and a brother.

Rāma was an embodiment of total obedience to his father. A point that needs to be properly appreciated in the analysis of the *Rāmāyaṇa* is that at no point was it Daśaratha who asked his eldest son Rāma to go in exile. When Rāma confronted him, he just kept mum with his head bent. It was too much for him to say what Kaikeyī wanted him to. With him staying silent, it was Kaikeyī who did the talking for him telling Rāma of the two boons that the former had promised her which she wanted him to fulfil now; they being the coronation of Bharata as the king and the exile of Rāma to the Daṇḍaka forest for fourteen years. She asked Rāma to 'unite his father with truth', *tātaṁ satyena yojaya*. A man of character that he was, once Rāma understood what the truth was, there was no getting away from it for him. The father had made the promise to his step-mother in the battlefield to fulfil her two wishes in appreciation of her efforts in saving his life. The step-mother did not express the wishes there and then. She had them kept in reserve to be fulfilled whenever she felt like asking for something. Now that she was asking, it would have been immoral on the part of the husband to go back on his promise and not to give her what she wanted. He would have been a liar if he were not to do so. The father could be proved to be true to his word if Rāma were to offer himself to honour the two wishes of his step-mother in fulfilment of the promises made to her earlier, since they concerned him. And this is what he chose to do.

To obey the elders, particularly the father, is the core of Indian culture. Rāma symbolized it. When he was brought into the presence of his father, he found him listless. He did not greet him as usual. He could not make out the reason for it. Kaikeyī who was with him at the time chose to speak out and tell him that the father is speechless for fear of him, not willing to convey him something unpleasant. He had promised her two boons and had high regard for her, but was repenting now like a common man. Truth is the root of virtue. If Rāma were to do whatever, pleasant or unpleasant, his father would have told him, then she would like to tell him that. As soon as she finished her

words, came out Rāma with his stunning announcement: At the words of the king (my father) I can jump into fire, swallow poison and drown in the ocean. I do not speak the second time. That was Rāma's devotion to his father. Daśaratha while lamenting for his son (Rāma) says "I would have been happy were my son to disobey me, but that he will not do."

Even though Kaikeyī had been cruel to Rāma, he had no rancour for her. He restrains Lakṣmaṇa for being rude to her. As a matter of fact, there was a special kind of relationship between him and Kaikeyī. She had great affection for him. So did he for her. This was till Mantharā had poisoned her ears. The affection was such that when Mantharā broke the news of Rāma's coronation to her by awakening her from sleep, she felt so pleased that she gave her ornament as a reward for bringing her such good news. It was a well-knit family till the intervention of Mantharā with loving step-sons and step-mothers. Bhagavān Vālmīki has shown that it is outsiders who sow the seeds of discord even in such families and one has to be careful of them.

"Dayā dharma kā mūla hai", compassion is the root of dharma (which is the mainstay of society, as said earlier), has proclaimed Sant Tulasidas. Bhagavān Vālmīki through his conduct and character has tried to inculcate this virtue in society. He was compassionate not only to fellow human beings but also to all beings. He was badly shaken when he saw the female of a *krauñca* bird crying when its male companion was shot at by a hunter. So upset was he that he pronounced a curse on him not to have any respect in society till eternity. At that time he was proceeding to a river to take bath with his pupil Bharadvāja following him. Even when the blood-soaked bird was left behind in his movement forward, he could not take away his mind from it. That was his compassion even for a bird.

Vālmīki would not countenance violence of any kind without provocation. That is the message that he seems to give through Sītā's words to Rāma when she asks him not to court the enmity of demons and kill them for their not having caused them offence personally: *aparādham vinā hantuṃ loko vīra na maṃsyate*. While this was one side of the picture, the other side was that Rāma had promised safety and protection to the sages

and hermits of the forest who had approached him for these from the demons who were oppressing them, the promise that Rāma could not go back on. To stake one's own life for the sake of others is the highest form of compassion which society needs for its well-being.

There is another incident of compassion that directly concerns Vālmīki. When Lakṣmaṇa had left Sītā in an advanced stage of pregnancy near his Āśrama, it was Vālmīki who following her cries had approached her, consoled her by telling her that she should take it that she had come to her father's house with a different location, *viṣayāntarasthaṁ...pitur nīketam*¹, brought her to the quarters of lady hermits near his Āśrama and placed her in their care with a word for special consideration for her out of deference for him. When she had delivered the children, it was he who performed their birth rites and taught them the *Rāmāyaṇa* that he had composed. When Rāma was performing the Aśvamedha sacrifice, he went to Ayodhyā, though uninvited, set up his camp outside it and sent the young sons of Sītā to move about the streets of Ayodhyā singing the *Rāmāyaṇa*, especially near the site of the sacrifice, particularly during the intervals to it to catch the ears of Rāma under a well laid out plan to unite Sītā with him. The plan was that the people of Ayodhyā were to mark the resemblance of the little ones with Rāma which they did. With this the seer thought the doubt in their mind about Sītā's purity would be laid to rest. Rāma wanted Sītā to prove her chastity in the assembly. Sītā was brought to it by Vālmīki who made the sterling announcement about the same which needs to be reproduced in words of gold:

*bahuvārṣasahasrāṇi tapaścaryā mayā kṛtā /
nopāśñīyāṁ phalaṁ tasyā duṣṭe yaṁ yadi maithilī ॥*²

"Let me lose all merit gained though practice of penance for thousands of years if Sītā were impure." The tenth son of Pracetas he had never told a lie. On that basis he assures Rāma that the twins are his sons. He has never committed a sin mentally, physically or verbally. With all this purity of his he testifies to the purity of Sītā. How many sages and seers there

could be who could renounce for the sake of others that which is so dear to them and for acquiring which they had striven so hard.

Society has in its fold of all types of people. Vālmīki is quite concerned with their well-being. When Bharata approaches him in the forest Rāma puts him certain queries by way of eliciting information from him if everything is well with him in the kingdom. Three or four of the queries are of particular interest in this connection and pertain to the common people. Rāma enquires of Bharata whether the cultivators and dairy farmers are happy with him and the people are happy in trade and that whether he pays proper salary and allowance to the army and does not delay them. He further enquires whether a person of good conduct after proper investigation by competent people is sent to prison in his kingdom out of greed on false charges and whether the subjects insult him because of heavy extortion of taxes from them. All this shows the concern of Vālmīki for the well-being of the common people.

When Śatrughna is to go to Mathurā to engage demon Lavaṇa in fight Rāma gives him some instructions. He asks him to endear himself to his army by maintaining it handsomely, well-fed, satisfied and cheered by friendly addresses. "Wealth, women and relations will not be available to the troops where they will be placed, so they should be kept in good cheer", says he.

The first thing after abduction of Sītā was to trace her. Rāma was alone at that time with only Lakṣmaṇa by his side. He did not give up nor did he lose heart. He made friends with strangers, entered into an alliance with them and with their help was able to trace Sītā and recover her by invading well-fortified Laṅkā putting to death its formidable ruler and the hordes of his armies. He could even build the causeway over the ocean to reach the enemy city with the help of the vast numbers of the soldiers of his new-found allies. He also welcomed into his fold the brother of the adversary who had deserted him keeping his counsel to himself much against the advice of his allies. Bhagavān Vālmīki's message through this to the people is to so develop the stamina in them as not to give in to the most adverse

of the situations. Nothing can come in the way of the strong will, seems to be the idea Bhagavān Vālmīki is trying to convey here.

The *Rāmāyaṇa* is full of pithy sayings about the way one should conduct oneself in life. They reflect Bhāgavān Vālmīki's thinking on the subject. A few of such bear reproduction here by way of specimen: One should take such food as could be digested and not cause ailment.³ One should do a thing at the opportune moment.⁴ With initiative the people would not suffer even in difficult things.⁵ Courage is strength; there is no greater strength than it, one who has it for him there is nothing that he cannot achieve.⁶ Not to be in low spirits is the root of prosperity. It is the supreme happiness.⁷ There is no greater sin than violating somebody else's wife.⁸ Death is the penalty for one who has sex with one's real sister or the wife of his younger brother.⁹ The strong-willed people do not give way to anger.¹⁰ He really is a man who controls the rising anger with forgiveness.¹¹ Anger takes away everything; it is an enemy that takes away life, it is an enemy with the face of a friend, it is an exceedingly sharp sword.¹² An angry man has no sense of what he should say and what not. There is no activity undeserving for him.¹³ For a person born in the world there are three instructors, the father, the mother and the teacher.¹⁴ By serving elders one gets everything in life—heaven, wealth, knowledge, sons and happiness.¹⁵ Those who do not side with their friends after they have their interest served, those ungrateful ones, when they die, even the wild animals would not eat.¹⁶ There is atonement prescribed for a butcher of a cow, a drunkard, a thief and a violator of a vow but not for an ungrateful person.¹⁷ Whether rich or poor, happy or miserable, good or bad, a friend is the ultimate refuge for a person.¹⁸

The contribution of Bhagavān Vālmīki to the welfare of society lies in giving direction to society by means of his theme and the wise statements interspersed in the course of his treatment of it that may lead it to the path of righteousness, the path suitable to its growth and development. His *Rāmāyaṇa* is a standing testimony to his intense desire and unremitting effort to inculcate a set of values among people of all times to make them better human beings. He reveals his mind through his

immortal creation, the *Rāmāyaṇa*. The reader or the listener while going through or listening to it cannot but feel the throb of his heart which pulsated to improve the quality of life of the people. This he alone could do. He was the sage, the Bhagavān: *Vālmīkir bhagavān ṛṣiḥ*.¹⁹

References

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2. *Rāmāyaṇa*, 7.9.19.
3. *ibid.*, 3.50.18.
4. *ibid.*, 4.25.11.
5. *ibid.*, 3.63.19.
6. *ibid.*, 4.1.121.
7. *ibid.*, 5.12.10.
8. *ibid.*, 3.38.30.
9. *ibid.*, 4.9.34.
10. *ibid.*, 5.52.16.
11. *ibid.*, 5.55.6.
12. *ibid.*, 7.59; Interpolated 2.21.
13. *ibid.*, 5.55.5.
14. *ibid.*, 2.111.2.
15. *ibid.*, 2.30.36.
16. *ibid.*, 4.30.73.
17. *ibid.*, 4.34.12.
18. *ibid.*, 8.8.
19. *ibid.*, 7.93.1.

Sanskrit Vocabulary of South East Asia

Even a casual visitor to Southeast Asia with a Sanskrit background is struck with the presence of Sanskrit words in the vocabularies of the languages there. It fills his heart with great satisfaction to notice the wide prevalence of Sanskrit in the vast stretches going by the name of Southeast Asia with a variety of languages and dialects and sub-dialects, a standing testimony to the close cultural links between India and Southeast Asia. The absorption of so much of Sanskrit must have been a gradual process spanning several centuries of acculturation.

It may well be argued that language is not the only link between countries and regions; there could be, indeed there are, other links as well, links of ethnicity, history, religion, mythology and so on but everything said and done, it is the linguistic link which is the most important for its being the most basic one pertaining as it does to expression, something through which a man gives vent to his thoughts, ideas and feelings. That Sanskrit could make such deep inroads into languages of Southeast Asia speaks volumes for its expressiveness which must have provided the need to the speakers of these languages over the ages to adopt words from it—in the case of some languages like Thai the adoption is an ongoing process—and integrate them with words of their own, a phenomenon we are witnessing in the case of English in India these days which has resulted in the adoption of enormous number of words from it by Indian languages which have come to be accepted as much original as the original Indian words. Their translations attempted in many

Address prepared for Prof. S.M. Katre Birth Centenary Seminar on "Research Trends in Lexicography, Sanskrit & Linguistics". Deccan College, Post-Graduate & Research Institute, Pune. June

cases have remained moribund with people merrily using English words even in their vernacular conversation for want of better equivalents, something that had happened in the case of Persian and Arabic, words from which had percolated in large numbers in Indian languages in ages gone by for their better expressiveness. What is happening in the case of English or had happened earlier in the case of Arabic and Persian in India happened in Southeast Asia as well. Words of Sanskrit that 'migrated' from India are no longer Sanskrit words at present, they are local words now. They have been assimilated into the respective languages and in some cases given their own meaning. This has resulted in the evolution of an interesting phenomenon of 'connect' and 'disconnect'; the words do maintain some connection, however indistinct, with their originals to make their identification with them possible, yet they are not the same, having assumed a different form in accordance with the phonology of the language into which they have been assimilated.

Once integrated into the mainstream of the respective languages these foreign words give up their foreign tag and become part and parcel of the current coin in them. To the Sanskritists of India they may be Sanskrit words, if they are *tatsamas*, of the form resembling to Sanskrit or words of Sanskrit origin if they are *tadbhavas*, derived from Sanskrit. To ordinary men and women who speak the language they are the words of their own language and not words come from any other source, words borrowed and assimilated. They are their words reflecting very much as they do their ethos. In this connection, I am tempted to recount my own experience. It is some two decades I was going to Kuala Lumpur from Bangkok by train. I had with me the name and address of a person I was to meet there. As the train was nearing Kuala Lumpur I took out the address book. It carried the address "Uttara Long", Kuala Lumpur. Unable to make sure as to what "Uttara Long" was, whether it was the name of a locality or a road or a street, I enquired of the conductor of the compartment. He looked at the address book and said "*uttara* is a Malaysian word which means north". His remark both amused and delighted me. Well, *uttara* is Malaysian. As is with *uttara*, so with other Sanskrit words. They are at present either Malaysian or Cambodian or Lao or Thai or Indonesian.

Now, when through an attempt like the present one, the people of Southeast Asia will be made aware that what is their's is India's also, they cannot but be impressed with the thought of sharing what is common with each other. And that is precisely the aim of the present attempt. It is the link that will bind the peoples of the countries of Southeast Asia with the people of India, the link that is vital in forging a common bond between them with enormous possibilities of bringing about better understanding which is the precursor of goodwill, harmony and friendship.

A close look at the words of Sanskrit origin of Southeast Asia reveals that some of them are sometimes more expressive and better suited being less heavy and more direct than their counterparts in use in India. A couple of instances would bear it out. For the English word prejudice the Malay word is *pūrvasaṅkā* (written as *pūrvasaṅkā*) which in any case is a trifle more catchy than the *pūrvāgraha* of Hindi. In the same category are the words *vārtāwān* Sanskrit *vārtāvān* for journalist and *berita utama*, Sanskrit *vārtā uttama* or *uttama vārtā* for headlines in that language which are more expressive and to the point than *patrakāra* and *surkhiyān* (Urdu word meaning those in red) in use in Hindi. Similarly, more simple and direct and certainly less heavy is the word *anekprasang*, Sanskrit *anekaprasaṅga*, of Thai for multipurpose than its Indian counterpart *bahūddeśyīya*. Other words falling in the same category are *lokasattva* of Bahasa Indonesia for animals and *dhanāgāra*, pronounced as *thanākhān* (literally meaning house of money) of Thai for bank or *duralekha*, pronounced as *thoralekh* of Thai for telegram.

An observation that may be of interest here is that in a few languages—it is particularly relevant in the case of Thai—the Sanskrit quotient goes up with hierarchical order. There is more of Sanskrit among elites, the nobility than among the common folk. For son-in-law the Thai elites would use the word *jāmadā*, pronounced as *chāmadā*, a derivative of Sanskrit *jāmātā* while the common folk would prefer *lookhey*. Similarly, the common word for marriage in Thai is *ṭān nān* while among the elite it is either *vivāhamonkhon*, Sanskrit *vivāhamāṅgala* or *monkhon somrot*, Sanskrit *maṅgalasamarasa* or just *vivāha*. Added to this is the observation that the locals while adopting words from Sanskrit have not often imparted them an aesthetic look. To celebrate the 50th

anniversary of the coronation of the present king the Thais used the word *kāñcañābhisek(a)* rather than the *suvarṇajayanī* of *abhiṣeka* which would have been used in India.

There is a whole lot of technical terms, educational, economic and political, drawn from Sanskrit, particularly in Lao and Thai, a study of which could be revealing. They could provide a good material to a researcher in this field. For him a work like the present one could be of inestimable value. So will it be to one who wants to take up the socio-cultural study.

Sanskrit words in the languages of Southeast Asia are found in four forms: one, in their original Sanskrit form, e.g., *vipāka*, Cambodian, consequence; *āgama*, Indonesian and Malay, religion; *gaja*, Indonesian elephant; *put(e) ra*, *put(e) rī* Indonesian, son and daughter respectively; *yāpana*, Lao, life maintenance; *yāmika*, Lao, watchman; *nāga*, Lao, a noble man; *nandī*, Lao, happiness, rejoicing; *alpa*, Malay, careless, negligent; *dayā*, Malay, force, deceit, cunning; *aneka*, Malaya many; *dāna*, Malay, charity, gift; *p(r)ā(r)thanā*, Thai desire; *velā*, Thai, time; *naḍikā*, Thai, hour; *vivāh(a)*, Thai, marriage; two, with negligible change in sound like the loss of final vowel, the dentalization of palatal *ś* and cerebral *ṣ* and *ṇ*, the *o* form of *a* (a common feature even in eastern part of India), the *w* form of *v*, the insertion of *g* before a nasal, the de-aspiration of aspirants like *bh* which is pronounced as *b* in Indonesian and Malay or *p* and *ph* in Lao and Thai respectively, the appearance of anaptycal vowel among conjunct consonants and so on, e.g., Thai, Lao, Cambodian, Malay and Indonesian, *bahāsā*, *bhāṣā*, language; Thai and Lao *nāyok*, *nāyaka*, chief, leader; *kāy*, Cambodian, Malay and Thai, *kāya*, body; *dharmaniyom*, *dharmaniyama*, Thai, custom; *sāsana*, Thai and Lao, religion; *wanītā*, Indonesian, *vanitā*, woman; three, with phonetic variation of Sanskrit words according to local pronunciation, e.g., *ākād*, Thai, *aṅkāś*, Malay and Indonesian, *ākāśa*, sky, space; *khana*, Cambodian, *kṣana*, moment; *khana*, Thai, *gaṇa* group (vide *khanabody*, dean of the faculty); *dontrī*, Thai, *tantrī*, music; *phan*, Lao and Thai, *bandha*, utensil; *cuaca*, Malay, *svaccha*, clear and so on; four, (a) in combination with another word, a synonym, a combination seemingly superfluous, carrying the same meaning for which either of the two would have sufficed, e.g. *mit(d)saṇāy*, Lao and Thai, *mitrasaṇaya*, friend; *citacet*, Lao,

cittacetā, mind; *kāmalāg*, Lao, *kāmarāga*, sexual passion; *nained*, Lao, *nayanānetra*, eye; *nītinai*, Lao, *nītinaya*, by law, *dejure*; *phalāphon*, Lao, *phalāphala*, fruits, big and small; *vanudyān*, Lao, *vanaudyāna*, forest preserve; *supamaṅgon*, Lao, *śubhamāṅgala*, good luck, welfare; *sukhakṣema*, Lao, happiness; *śūnyākāḍ*, Lao, *śūnyākāśa*, vaccum; *kulavaṅsa*, Malay, *kulavaṁśa*, family; *kiyattiyot*, Thai, *kīrtiyaśas*, fame, (b) in combination with a synonymous Sanskrit word, the combination yielding an altogether a different meaning, *hedkan*, Lao, *hetukāraṇa*, proceedings, situation, event (c) in combination with a local word, both of them meaning the same, e.g. *rāṅgkāy*, *rāṅg* = body, Thai, *kāy* = *kāya*, Sanskrit, *rāṅgkāy* = body, (d) in combination with a local word both having separate meanings (this category has larger number of words), e.g., *orang bisaya*, *orang*, Malay, *bisaya*, Sanskrit, *viśaya*, a person from *Śrīvijaya*; *pañcalima*, *pañca*, Sanskrit, *lima*, Malay, *pañcalima* = jugglery; *pelasari*, *pela*, *phala*, Sanskrit, *sari*, Javanese, *pelasari* = a plant with yellow scented flowers; *bāṅgrāk*, *bāṅg*, place, Thai *rāk*, Sanskrit *rāga*, *bāṅgrāk* = a place for love; *namtān*, *nam*, Thai, water (extract or juice), *tāl* (pronounced as *tān*) Sanskrit *tāla*, *namtān* = sugar; *pholomai*, *phala*, Sanskrit, *mai*, Thai; *tonmaī*, *ton*, Sanskrit *taru*, *mai* Thai, tree; (e) in combination with a non-local word, *wargaduniā*, Malay, *warga*, *varga*, Sanskrit, *duniā*, world, Arabic, *wargaduniā* = a stateless person; *mahāmilia*, Malay, *mahā*, great, Sanskrit, *milia*, Arabic, *mahāmilia* = Highness.

In many cases the Sanskrit words in Southeast Asian languages have undergone change in meaning. Thus, in Thai *p(r)ā(r)thanā*, already noticed, means desire; *karunā* means please; *pramān* (*pramāṇa*) means approximately; *viniccaya*, Sanskrit *vinīścaya* in Cambodian means judgement; *kasina āyu*, Sanskrit *kṣīṇa āyu*, in Lao means one who is eighteen year or over eighteen year old; *bitha*, Sanskrit *pīṭha*, in Lao means to hurt, to kill; *saṅketa* in Lao means agreement, condition; *cercā*, Sanskrit *carcā* in Malay means abuse; *saṅg kat*, Sanskrit *saṅgata* in Lao means similar, comparable; *saṅked*, Sanskrit *saṅketa*, means abuse, revile; *nāḍī*, Sanskrit the same, in Malay means wrist; *peribhāsā*, Sanskrit *paribhāṣā*, in Malay means proverb, idiom; *remaja*, Sanskrit *ramya*, in Malay means adolescent, youth; *perwarā*, Sanskrit *pravarā*, in Malay means court-damsel; *lakṣamaṇa*, Sanskrit *lakṣmaṇa* in Malay means a naval

admiral; *ajita*, Sanskrit the same, in Indonesian means undependable; *anartha*, Sanskrit the same, in Indonesian means poor, needy; *āsvāsa*, Sanskrit *āśvāsa*, in Indonesian means whiteness; *camara*, Sanskrit the same, in Indonesian means bull, male cow; *cāṇḍāla*, Sanskrit the same, in Indonesian means a person in exile; *sāmanta*, Sanskrit the same, in Indonesian means neighbour; *sārathi*, Sanskrit the same, in Indonesian means, vehicle, carriage; *svāhā*, Sanskrit the same, in Indonesian means heaven; *pāpa*, Sanskrit the same, in Indonesian means difficulty, bad luck; *pradātā*, Sanskrit the same, in Indonesian means judge, lawyer, server of justice; *prajā*, Sanskrit the same in Indonesian means grandchild; *pratāpa*, Sanskrit the same, in Indonesian means discussion, negotiation; *sampāna*, Sanskrit *sopāna*, in Balinese (Indonesian) means high wall, barricade.

Southeast Asia has been the bastion of Indian culture for centuries. It is no wonder then that there should be so much of presence of Sanskrit in its vocabularies. The present is only a sample survey of it.

Post-Independence Sanskrit Literature : Contemporary Socio-cultural Paradigms

Sanskrit literature has an ancient past. Literary activity in Sanskrit has continued unabated for thousands of years. The speciality of Sanskrit literature is that it is old as well new. The pace with which literature was produced in Sanskrit in bygone ages, with the same it is being produced now. Modern writers have enriched it with thousands of their works. In extent, variety and quality Sanskrit literature compares very favourably with literature produced in any of the modern Indian languages.

It is inevitable that the society in which a writer lives should exercise its influence on him. It gets reflected in his works. It is simply not possible that he may remain unaffected by what goes around him. He is a witness to what goes on in society, good or bad. Since he is more sensitive to happenings, he is more proactive to them. The social inequalities, the social vices touch him more and he sets about drawing the attention of society to them and thus contributes in his own way to correct them or at least to minimize them. This is what Shakespeare and Bernard Shaw did in the West. It is their effort that drew the attention of society to contemporary problems.

To provide entertainment is not the sole aim of literature; it also is to provide guidance to it. The validity of it the rhetoricians of India had realized in the early period. The removal of what is not good,

Keynote Address at the National Seminar on "Post-Independence Sanskrit Literature : Socio-cultural Paradigms", at Patna under the auspices of Indian Institute of Advanced Study, Shimla and the University of Patna, April 26, 2006. Hon'ble Vrishin Patel, Minister for Human Resource Development, Govt. of Bihar presided.

śivetarakṣati, was pronounced by them as one of the aims through advice at once as dear and pleasant as that by a loving wife : *kāntāsammitatayopadeśa*.

Whereas the antiquity of Sanskrit was its source of strength, it served also as an impediment to fresh thinking and innovation. For centuries the Sanskrit writers drew their themes from the *Rāmāyaṇa*, the *Mahābhārata* and the Purāṇas. Fortunately, there is change in this tendency of late and the present-day Sanskrit writer has started looking around for his themes and has found them in the problems the society, he thinks, is beset with. The result: The modern Sanskrit literature, especially of the post-independence period is reflecting more and more the contemporary social problems. To a large extent the modern Sanskrit literature is getting related to modern Indian society.

Post-independence Sanskrit literature is a part of modern Sanskrit literature the beginning of which is traced by critics from the 19th century. A.D. A question may well arise here: What could be the rationale behind the classification of modern Sanskrit literature into pre-independence and post-independence. The modern Sanskrit literature is so vast that it simply is not possible to evaluate it properly in its entirety in one go. It has to be split up. This splitting up can be attempted either on the basis of period, the literature of this century or that or on the basis of a particular event which had served as a catalyst in the country's history. The achievement of independence from the British rule is one such catalyst. This was adopted as a dividing line for literary production by classifying it as pre-independence and post-independence. It may be mentioned here, in passing, that this was not just the only basis for classification. The other unsaid basis is the difference in content and structure. The pre-independence Sanskrit literature was composed in the shadow of the British rule and the desire to overthrow it. While on the one hand there are works in it like the *Angrejacandrikā* of Vinayakabhatta and the *Rājāṅglamahodaya* of Ramaswami Raju, the *Gītābhārata* of Trailokyamohan Guhaniyogi extolling the British crown and the British rule, on the other hand there are works like the *Satyāgrahagītā* and the *Uttarasatyāgrahagītā* of Kshama Raw and the *Svātantryasambhava* of Balakrishna depicting the urge and the struggle to gain independence from it. The post-independence

Sanskrit literature is being produced when India has thrown off the foreign yoke with its people managing their destiny themselves. That is why there is more concern the way the things are being carried on now; the plethora of problems plaguing the country. The Sanskrit writer, like a writer in any other language, is pained at the way his compatriots mismanage things and indulge in vices like corruption weakening thereby the country's foundations. He is appalled at the intrigues of the foreign powers to break its nerve by promoting terrorism and inciting communal passions. The tone and the tenor of the two classes of literature, the pre-independence and post-independence, is markedly different. And this also accounts for drawing a dividing line between the two.

Plays

Sundararaj, a playwright of South India has taken up for his theme a common enough problem of Indian families for his play the *Snuṣāvijaya*. While he has succeeded on the one hand in amusing his readers by describing the fight between the mother-in-law and the daughter-in-law, the ill treatment by the former of the latter and her softness for her own daughter, he has put a question mark before society: Will it never be possible for even the best of the daughters-in-law to escape the verbal darts of the vicious mother-in-law and the taunts and innuendos of the unhelpful and needlessly hostile sister-in-law?

Is she doomed to swallow all the insults heaped upon her for no fault of hers? The playwright has succeeded in pinpointing the perpetual conflict between the daughter-in-law and the mother-in-law and the sister-in-law that has robbed many an Indian family of peace and smooth flow of life. The mother-in-law had been the mistress of the house till the arrival of the daughter-in-law. She is unwilling to pass on her authority to a newcomer in her household who has a claim to acceptability in it and something of the love and affection of its members. In this scenario the worst affected is the old man, the father, who had striven all along to protect his honour and that of his family and who now finds the same being threatened by incessant internecine quarrels. This is the story of every street, if not of every family.

Another play of the post-independence period which specially draws our attention is *Bhrāntabhārata* jointly composed by three playwrights Nagesh Pandit, Shaligram Dwivedi and Achyut Padhye. Staged in 1968 under the auspices of the Vāgvardhinī Sabhā of Nagpur, it deals with the problem of India losing its moorings under the guise of modernism. In the very Nāndī verse the playwrights express the view:

*mātas tvadīyacaraṇaṁ śaraṇaṁ sadāstu
bhrāntasya bhadravimukhodyatabhāratasya ।
yat saṅgato 'bhavad idaṁ surarājapūjyaṁ
varṣaṁ vimohaṣīrājānivāsabhūmiḥ ॥*

“O mother, may this Bhāratavarṣa (India) moving towards what is not good take recourse in your feet. It is because of association with these that this, the abode of sages free from delusion, had become an object of adoration (even) of Indra.”

After the Nāndī, the Invocatory Stanza, Nārada appears on the stage and gives an account of the time-honoured values being discarded in India and the flood of European culture inundating the Indian landscape. The pupil of Nārada conversant with the situation obtaining in the country bemoans:

*pṛvato vā 'tha puruṣo dūrad eva hi śobhate ।
kiṁvadanī kṛtārthā 'smin deśe bhāratasañjñake ॥
Āryavarṇitānāṁ guṇānāṁ anyatamo 'pi na labhyate
bhāratīyeṣu ।
utpaśyāmi balavat patanam eteṣāṁ ॥*

“A mountain or a man looks good from a distance only. The old saying goes well with this country called Bhārata. I do not find among its people even a single one of the qualities going with noble persons. I visualize their steep fall.”

The *Vidhiviparyāsa* of Srijiva Nyayatirtha is a satire on the gender equation leading to the funny situation of women losing much of their femininity. Men and women have different constitutions. It is a different matter to remove inequality in their status and position and to sidestep their biological make-up which cannot be bridged by such artificial measures as women dressing like men, having hair cut like them, riding a horse, driving cars and aeroplanes, adding muscle to themselves by going to gyms, going hunting, joining the

army, discarding veil and courting inter-caste and inter-religious marriages or adopting live-in relationships—leading to a plethora of problems.

Virendra Kumar Bhattacharya has some of the more pinching of the problems of the modern day life for the themes of his plays. His play the *Śārdūlaśakaṭa* describes the life of the employees of the Transport Department. It shows them singing in chorus the rebellious song:

*vināśyatu cakram vidveṣiṇām no niḥśeṣam ।
digante vṛajāmo rātrindivam lakṣyoddeśam ॥*

“Let the intrigues of our enemies come to naught. Let us move towards our goal day and night to the very stretch of the quarters.”

After the Gherao the song of the workers in chorus is:

*śilpalalāmaḥ karmigaṇo nādryate ced vittavatā ।
yāti samsthā luptipatham rāṣṭradhanam ca kṣāmadaśam ॥*

“If the moneyed people were to show no consideration to even the best of the craftsmen, the organization goes under and the national wealth suffers depletion.”

Their leader exhorts them with the words: “The mill owners are overpowered with greed. They are out to make lots of money for themselves while leaving a pittance for the workers as they would do to a dog. We are slaves. We have to improve our condition ourselves. The workers must look to their interest themselves. In unity lies strength.” The workers sing in chorus:

*vādyam dhvanatu vimardya malayam
harṣaḥ svanatu vimathya hṛdayam ।
yāsyāmo vīthim nrtyacāreṇa
kampayanto 'vanim ॥*

“Let the band sound as high (loud) as the Malaya (mountain). Let ecstasy resound and churn the heart. We will walk in the street dancing.”

Policemen enjoy a ride but do not pay the fare. If the saviour were to turn into a killer, what will happen to the country?:

*śrayate yadi rakṣaṇakartā bhakṣaṇavṛttim api svapade ।
kriyate khalu kena tv-rāṣṭre śiṣṭajanasya ripor damanam ॥*

“If the saviour were to be the killer in his (station) in life, who will control in this country the immoral enemy?”

Śārdūlaśakaṭa in every respect is a play reflective of the problems of the modern age.

Another similar play is *Veṣṭanavyāyoga* that brings up the subject of the latest of the weapons of the workers; Gherao, ‘to besiege, ‘to quarantine’. Many of the young people have no jobs even though educated. Educated unemployment is India’s bane:

*śikṣitā api karmahīnāḥ santi bahavo yuvāna idānīm ।
paran tu niyogarataḥ vartanavetanavṛddhaye ghaṭayanti
karmavyāghātam ॥*

“Many young people even educated have no job at present while those who have it obstruct it for hike in wages and perks”.

The *Garvaparīṇati* of Nandalal depicts the life of two brothers of whom the younger one is educated but arrogant while the elder one is uneducated but sober. The younger one looks down upon the elder one for his lack of education and urban manners. But it is through the efforts of the latter only that his life is saved at the end. What the playwright wants to emphasize here is that mere learning is of no consequence unless it were to lead to inculcation of human values which has precious little to do with education while those values are inborn in certain individuals and do not necessarily go with education. Education is not an end in itself. And the present day education failing to improve the quality of life lacks in its basic purpose of proper direction to society in this regard.

The comic play the *Vivāhaviḍambana* of Srijiva Nyayatirtha focuses on the social evil of another type; the elderly people wanting to marry young girls. In it an old person is shown eager to tie the nuptial knot with a young girl of sixteen years. He is befooled by some young men of his locality to shell out money for ornaments and bridal wear. They have the money from the old man but marry the girl to a young boy of her age. The old man is left to rue his fate. There are many an elderly people in our society who are driven by the desire to marry girls half their age, the girls who could well be their daughters, had they had them. The illegitimate wish of the old man the playwright expresses in the most telling words:

*yastidhārī śaṣṭivarsah saḥarsah sthaviro varah-
candralekhasparsakamaḥ karam vistarayatya aho ॥*

“How strange, an old man of 60 with a stick is stretching his hand to touch Candralekhā.”

Y. Mahalinga Sastry in his *Ubhayarūpaka* has for his theme the slighting by the English educated younger son of a farmer of his uneducated elder brother who is also looked down upon by his farmer father who has his eyes opened at the end through an incident which makes him go into remorse for his indiscretion.

The *Prāyaścitta* of Ramanath Mishra, a play in five Acts, raises the important question of the poor being condemned to poverty for all time and the rich looking down upon them. A farmer in a village gives shelter to an orphaned girl. The Zamindar of the village tortures him in various ways. The Zamindar's son falls in love with the girl which the Zamindar does not approve, that being not in keeping with his status. He throws his son out but after a while through the intercession of some people and through the very force of circumstances consents to his son marrying the girl. Not only that. He also gives his own daughter in marriage to the same farmer whom he had been torturing earlier.

Many of Ksama Row's plays have social themes. Her *Bālavidhavā* is the story of a widow who is in the service of a rich man who wants to marry her but does not find a priest to solemnize it, that being against the Śāstric tenets. The man then proposes to the widow to enter into a live-in relationship to which she does not agree. She also does not agree to the court-marriage. One night she quietly slips out of the house not knowing where to go. The play is a poignant depiction of the condition of widows in our society who more often than not are ostracized by it and are condemned to piteous existence for ever.

The *Māyājāla*, a play of Leela Row Dayal, deals with the subject of the diminishing of the importance of the time-honoured institution of marriage and appearance in its place of the live-in relationship, a typical western trend, which has started making inroads in our society as well. The play has four girls, each with a different approach. One divorces the husband after marriage, the second starts living with a Brahmin, the third the husband divorces on arrival at Paris and the fourth on helping an unconscious young man regain consciousness continues to live with him refusing to marry him.

Skand Shankar Khot's *Mālābhaviṣya* deals a blow on quack physicians who ply their trade without licence. One such quack on being held for prescribing wrong medicine says that just as a son inherits the property of the father in the same way he has inherited his licence! The quack is held and fined.

The playlet *Apasaramahimā* in Krishna Lal's collection of plays *Camatkāraḥ* is a depiction of such officers whose subordinates are always in fear of them and spend most of their time in keeping them in good humour. They are a depressed lot with life offering them little happiness.

The two playlets *Yautuka* and *Utkoca* in the collection *Ekāṅkadvaya* of Kshem Chand, as their very titles show, are an attack on the evil customs of dowry and corruption which have been and unfortunately still are the bane of Indian society.

Poems

From the point of view of modern problems the more noteworthy of the works among poems are the *Ātaṅkavādaśataka*, a century of verses on the problem of terrorism by Bhagirath Prasad Tripathi "Vagish Shastri", the *Bhraṣṭācārasaptaśatī*, 700 verses on the problem of corruption by Shiv Sagar Tripathi, the *Rājanītilīlāmṛta* on the low politics by Deepak Ghosh and the *Kaṇṭakāñjali* of Kantakarjuna (Arjun Wadekar) where each vice, nicknamed *kaṇṭaka*, gets a thorn, a verse for itself for its pungent delineation.

Satire is a powerful medium to draw attention of readers to contemporary social problems. Shastrarthamaharathi Madhavacharya employed it in creating a new Smṛti text, the *Tuḍesmṛti*, the English word today is used by him in the title, which highlights in the Maṇipravāla style, Sanskrit diction with a liberal dose of English words, to create a ripple effect, the westernized life style of the present day Indians eroding the time-honoured Indian one. A prominent name in the field of wit and satire in Sanskrit is that of Prashasya Mitra Shastri whose works the *Samskṛtavyaṅgyavilāsa*, the *Hāsavilāsa*, the *Komalakaṇṭakāvali* and the *Narmadā* are an important contribution to it.

With the attainment of independence patriotic fervour gripped the country. There developed a sort of a race to describe the noble

life of those who had contributed to securing freedom for the country from the foreign rule. A number of *kāvya*s, big and small, came to be composed on Mahatma Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru, Bhagat Singh, Chandrashekhar Azad, Bal Gangadhar Tilak, Vinayak Damodar Savarkar and so on. In this way a new literature was born wherein the Sanskrit writers paid their tribute to those great personalities for what they did for the country, an expression of their gratitude to them. Their works also served to acquaint the coming generations with what these great personalities stood for.

The attainment of independence also led to the surfacing of self esteem among Indians who found their icons in all those who had at one time resisted the foreign invaders, successfully or not. This led to the appearance of a whole lot of works in Sanskrit on Rana Pratap, Guru Gobind Singh and Chatrapati Shivaji who had shown indomitable courage in resisting the mighty Moghuls and Rani Lakshmibai of Jhansi who fought the British army. They became the subject matter of works like the *Śrīmatpratāparāṇāyaṇa*, *Pratāpavijaya*, *Chatrapati Śivarājyodaya*, *Śivājīcarita*, *Śrīgurugovindasimhacarita*, *Jhānsīśvarīcarita* and so on.

All these and other similar works have given Sanskrit literature a new form and shape that distinguish it from old Sanskrit literature. A need was felt in it to find new words for describing contemporary life. This was a great challenge for a modern Sanskrit writer. He adopted a threefold strategy to meet it. One, he adopted the foreign words as such, e.g., *rivālvharam gupta dhārayati*, puts the revolver in the pocket; *bamavisphoṭaḥ samjātaḥ*, the bomb exploded; two, he coined words on the basis of sound similarity, which in some cases also had sense similarity, e.g., *prataila* for petrol; *capalopānah* for *chappal*, sandal; *tripadī* for *tipāī*, tripod; *svaphena* for *sabun* or soap; *puspadhānī* for *fuldan*, flower vase; *kalamadhānī* for *kalamdān*, pen holder; three, he went in for loan translations, e.g., *maṇibandhaghaṭī* for wrist watch; *paṭalaghaṭī* for time piece; *bhittighaṭikā* for wall clock; *karakarpaṭa* or *karavāsas* for handkerchief; *naktāṁśuka* for night gown; *uraḥśravayantra* for stethoscope and so on.

Friends, I feel tempted here to recall an old incident. It was 1982. The occasion was the World Sanskrit Conference at Philadelphia. There was a panel discussion on modern Sanskrit literature.

Suddenly an elderly scholar from India sprang up on his feet and put the poser: If whatever is being written is in Sanskrit, it is Sanskrit literature. What is modern about it? I at the time from chair had said that its subject matter, its vocabulary, its style and technique are what make this literature modern. Even with the same verbs and nominal suffixes it has a different look. It reflects the modern life, its pains and pangs, its thoughts and ideas. It is that literature whose inner self is old but the outer texture is new; it represents an unique phenomenon of continuity and change, the look of past and present, the past which provides sustenance to it and the present that connects it with the present day. It has an identity of its own. It pops out of the old. Sanskrit literature it is but of the modern age with a posse of new words in old setting dished out in modern technique. It is this literature that will never allow Sanskrit to die out. The vitality and the adaptability that has brought it up to the modern age will carry it forward to the future.

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Sanskrit for Innovation

One of the most ancient languages of the world, Sanskrit has been with India since ages in its various incarnations of Vedic Sanskrit, Classical Sanskrit, Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit and now Modern Sanskrit. Every age has contributed to it while it has contributed to every age. Once called just Bhāṣā, the Speech, that is how it is designated by Yāska, *vide iveti bhāṣāyaṁ cānvadhyāyaṁ ca*¹, *iva* is used in the sense of likeness, similarity in both the Bhāṣā and the Veda and Pāṇini, *vide the sūtras bhāṣāyaṁ sadavasaśruvaḥ*², the roots *sad*, *vas* and *śru* have *Liṭ* optionally which is invariably to be replaced by *kvasu*, *sakhyaśiśvīti bhāṣāyaṁ*³, *sakhī* and *aśiśvī* are the forms prevalent in the Bhāṣā, to distinguish it from its Vedic archaic form, it came to acquire the name Sanskrit. When this new name came to be attached to it is difficult to say in our present stage of knowledge. Some scholars cite the Rāmāyaṇa stanza

*yadi vācaṁ pradāsyāmi dvijātir iva saṁskṛtām /
rāvaṇaṁ manyamānā mām sītā bhītā bhaviṣyati* ⁴

where Hanumān expresses his apprehension in using the *saṁskṛtā vāk* in his conversation with Sītā in that it would scare her into taking him to be Rāvaṇa, as an evidence of the use of the word Sanskrit for the language. Their view based on the use of the word *saṁskṛtā* gets weakened by the fact that Sanskrit as the name of a language has invariably to be in the neuter gender, *vide Amara saṁskṛtaṁ nāma daivī vāk*⁵, *saṁskṛtaṁ vāk*, *saṁskṛtam* in neuter and *vāk* in the feminine, a clear enough indication as per the system of Amara that the word *saṁskṛta* is invariably to be in the neuter. More reliable is the

Keynote Address at the National Seminar on "Sanskrit for Innovation", Centre for Advance Study, University of Poona, Pune,

July 24, 2006. Chair : Prof. V.N. Jha, Director of the Centre.

use of the word in another context in the same work where it could be taken to be indicative of a language of that name: *Ilvalaḥ saṁskṛtaṁ vadan*.⁶

Why the name Sanskrit was given to the language once called Bhāṣā is anybody's guess. Literally the word means refined formed as it is from *√kr* with the preposition *sam* in the sense of *bhūṣaṇa*, ornamentation or refinement, vide Pāṇ. *samparibhyāṁ karotau bhūṣaṇe*.⁷ The speech of the common people, when come to the hands of the cultured ones, the *śiṣṭas*, might have undergone some refinement and might have thereby acquired that designation. The *śiṣṭas* to keep up the spirit of refinement framed the rules for it deviation from which they did not approve.

In its long course of history India came into contact with people of different nationalities and regions either through conquests or trade or maritime intercourse or through academic and intellectual exchanges. They spoke different languages. For long years India was in contact with the Greeks and the Romans. Sanskrit, the then language of India of higher thought and culture, incorporated into it a big number of words from their languages. Its whole vocabulary of astronomical terms is of Greek origin. The Sanskrit astronomical texts carried the titles like the *Horāśāsra*. There is mention in the *Bṛhatsamhitā* of Varāhamihira of one Romakācārya and his postulation by the name Romakasiddhānta.⁸ The word for salt quarry in Sanskrit is *rumā* : *rumā syāl lavaṇākare*, *rumā*⁹ is Rome, the Indians learnt the art of salt quarrying from the Romans. So did they learn the art of casting coins from the Greeks. The innovation in Sanskrit lies not only in accepting into its fold foreign words but in giving them its own formulation. From Iona, a Greek island, came the word *yavana*. Now, this word became the base for the formation according to Sanskrit structure of another word, the word *yavanānī*, in the sense of the Ionian or Greek script. Since the word for script in Sanskrit, *lipi*, is in feminine, the word formed from *yavana* in the sense of the script of the *yavanas* also had to be in the feminine. For tracing its formation a process was also invented, the augment *ānuk* and the feminine suffix *nīs*, vide the *Vārtika yavanānī-lipyaṁ*. While adopting

foreign words Sanskrit gender was assigned to them. That was the innovation to give them the native look that made them easy of absorption. The Arabic word *kalama* was adopted and was given the masculine gender, vide the *Medinīkoṣa* : *kalamaḥ puṁsi lekhanīyām*.¹⁰ The Hebrew word *gamal* was adopted in Sanskrit via Arabic and Persian with the addition of *ka* in the form *kramelaka*.¹¹ The Mesopotamian word *melakkhu* was Sanskritized as *mleccha*¹² and a root *mleccha* for it was also coined which was assigned the meaning indistinct speech, *mleccha avyakte sabde*, which was explained by Bhaṭṭojidīkṣita as *asphuṭa* and *apaśabda*, unclear and bad speech. The Persian word *bandī*¹³ (prisoner) was adopted by Sanskrit and was used with the roots *kṛ* and *bhū* and nouns *gṛha*, *caura* and *pāla*. So were the words *dīnāra* and *kārṣāpaṇa* in the sense of a type of coins. The Persians became *Pārasīkas* in Sanskrit. The Persian word for emperor *Shahenshah* occurs in the form *Śāhiṣāhanuṣāhi* in the Allahabad Stone Pillar Inscription of Samudragupta. The Sanskrit word *vrata* has Hebrew and Avestan connections¹⁴ having been found in the old and the New Testaments in the forms *votum*, *voeu* (the precursor of vow) and Avesta *urvata* (Comp. English *vote*).

Very early in its movement forward Sanskrit had developed the innovative capability to accept into itself the form of the words that had evolved out of their altered pronunciation; the grammarians would call them *apabhraṁśas*, the corrupt forms, the linguists would term them evolutions; for them there is nothing like the corrupt form of a word; it is all a natural form of linguistic evolution. The classic example of this is the word *geha* in Sanskrit that is nothing but the changed form of Sanskrit *gṛha*. Pāṇini uses it in the context of tracing the formation of *gṛha*: *gehe kaḥ*¹⁴, the *Kṛt* suffix *ka* is added to *√grah* when the sense is that of *geha*. He mentions *geha* as the delimiting semantic factor for the suffix that he enjoins to be added to the root but does not proceed to trace its formation as he does of the word resulting out of the process, i.e. *gṛha*. The Sanskrit word *paṇḍā* the base for the well-known *paṇḍita*, meaning learning has Pali and Prakrit origins. At the root of it is the Sanskrit *prajña* which first becomes *paññā* in Pali and then

paṇṇā in Prakrit. The Sanskrit word *narta* (*ka*) from *√nrt* becomes *naṭṭa* in Prakrit which then becomes the source of such Sanskrit words as *naṭa*, *nāṭya*, *nāṭaka* and so on. The word *īṅgāla*¹⁶ used for charcoal by Śrī Harṣa in his *Naiṣadhiyacarita* and termed as *deśya śabda*, a local word, by Mallinātha is nothing but the Prakritized form of Sanskrit *aṅgāra*. The words which changed a little due to pronunciation vagaries were also adopted in Sanskrit like *guccha*, the changed form of *gutsa*, *lekḥā* and *nālikera* the changed form of *rekḥā* and *nārikela* respectively and so on. As a matter of fact, the doctrine of *abhedā*, the non-distinction between *r* and *l*, *v* and *b* and *ḍ* and *l*, *ralayor abhedāḥ*, *vabayor abhedāḥ*, *ḍalayor abhedāḥ* owes itself to the infinite innovative capacity of Sanskrit to accept in its fold what got corrupted or changed at the hands of multitudes of its speakers. This *abhedā* also led many a later poet to evolve pun on that basis like *jaḍa* being taken both as *jala* and *jaḍa* and connected semantically with other words in their compositions.

The process of assimilation of non-Sanskrit words in Sanskrit extends even to Dravidian languages. A Sanskrit word *ravindra* meaning lotus became *ravinda* in Prakrit and assumed the form *aravinda* as per the rules of South Indian languages where *a* is prefixed. It is this *aravinda* that Sanskrit adopted.¹⁷

The phenomenon of Prakritization of Sanskrit words and their acceptance back in Sanskrit is not limited to classical Sanskrit only. It goes back even to the period of the *Rgveda* whose *akkhalikṛtya*¹⁸ is nothing but the *akṣarīkṛtya* of Sanskrit. In the Jānaśruti-Raikva episode of the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* of the two swans one is called *bhallākṣa*¹⁹, a combination of two words, Prakrit *bhalla* from Sanskrit *bhadra* and Sanskrit *akṣa* meaning 'one with bright sight'.

It is due to the vagary of pronunciation that some of the words underwent change in form. Since they were not the normal forms they could evidently not be accounted for in grammar. They were to be accepted as such. And this is what Sanskrit did. Pāṇini's rule *prṣodarādīni yathopadiṣṭam*²⁰ precisely points at this, i.e., the words *prṣodara* etc. should be accepted as correct having been used by the cultured, *yathā śiṣṭair uccāritāni*

tathaiva sādḥūni. The regular form should have been *prṣadudara*, the word being a combination of *prṣat* and *udara*. The *t* not being pronounced the *a* and *u* of *prṣa* and *udara* turn into *o* and the word becomes *prṣodara*. It is the innovative potential of Sanskrit that even such mispronunciations it accepted. The other word of the type is *patañjali*, the name of a celebrated ṛṣi. The regular form should have been *patadañjali*. Similarly, *vārivāhaka* becoming *balāhaka* was accepted in Sanskrit as such. In the speech of the common people such abnormalities are common. That the literary speech should also accept them shows its inherent capacity to be flexible and inclusive. There is a well-known stanza in Sanskrit grammatical circles which lists with illustrations the anomalies grown out of mispronunciations, *pāramparyād apabhraṁsā viguṇair abhidhātṛbhiḥ prasiddhim āgatāḥ*, as says Bhartṛhari²¹:

*bhaved varṇāgamād dhamṣaḥ siṁho varṇaviparyayāt /
gūḍhotmā varṇavikṛter varṇanāśāt prṣodaram ||*²²

The word *haṁsa* comes into being because of the addition of a letter, the letter *s*; *han+a*; *han+s+a*; *siṁha* comes into being by the interchange of the letters, *hiṁsa>siṁha*; *gūḍhotmā* (*gūḍhotmā na prakāśate*) comes into being with irregularity in letters, *gūḍha ātmā*; and *prṣodara* comes into being because of loss of a letter, the letter *t*; *prṣat+udara*. In the category of irregular forms being accepted in Sanskrit and made an integral part of its vocabulary could also be included such words as *śakandhu*, *karkandhu*, *kulaṭā* etc. which should have been *śakāndhu* being the combination of *śaka* and *andhu* (*andhu*=well), *karkāndhu* that of *karka* and *andhu* and *kulāṭā* that of *kula* and *aṭā*. A sort of grammatical justification for them has been advanced by the Vārttikakāra on the device of *pararūpa*, the previous *a* assimilating itself in the following one: *śakandhvādiṣu pararūpaṁ vācyam* (under the sūtra *aco'ntyādi* ti.²³

While speaking of pun it may not be out of point to mention here the infinite capacity of Sanskrit to have more than one meaning of words which has led to the most unusual phenomenon of the whole poems being composed with double

meaning, the *dvyāśraya kāvyas*, the works like the *Rāghavapāṇḍavīya*, the same text giving the story of the *Rāmāyaṇa* and the *Mahābhārata*. Among the prose writers of Sanskrit Bāṇa used pun copiously in his works the *Kādambarī* and the *Harṣacarita* which were thick with its continuous occurrence, *nirantaraśleṣaghana*. Carried to extreme lengths it resulted in the composition of works like the *Vāsavadattā* of Subandhu where every syllable yielded double meaning: *pratyakṣaraśleṣamayāḥ prabandhaḥ*.

It is due to this pun that a great tragedy that was waiting to happen was averted in the medieval period. As the story goes, Rana Pratap of Mewar after prolonged resistance to Akbar, the Mughal emperor was reduced to utmost straits. He had been wandering about in the forests and had been subsisting on chapattis made of grass. One day a wild cat snatched from his son even that. Now, this was too much for the Rana. He decided to make up with the emperor. He had a letter drafted in Sanskrit offering truce. The letter reached the emperor. That being in Sanskrit, he gave it to one of his Hindu courtiers to interpret it for him. The Hindu courtier, though in the service of the emperor was in his heart of heart a great admirer of the Rana. He was appalled at the prospect of the Rana capitulating before the emperor. The letter was so drafted that it could be interpreted differently, its words yielding double meanings. He chose to interpret it in the way different from what it was intended to convey outwardly. One meaning was that he (the Rana) was surrendering to him (the emperor) and would be willing to be his subservient. The other meaning was that he would resist him to the last come what may. After the dispatch of the letter the Rana regained his composure and self-esteem and felt that he should not have dispatched the letter. He felt relieved on coming to know that the letter had been interpreted differently and resumed his resistance with redoubled energy. He also is said to have thanked profusely his learned aide who had drafted the letter. It was Sanskrit and its capacity for innovative interpretation of words that saved the situation for Pratap and redeemed his honour. From this it could be realized that pun in Sanskrit, a special characteristic of it, is not always for show

of pedantry. It has its usefulness in most critical of the situations.

When India gained independence Hindi was declared the official language whereby the business of the State was to be carried on in it as well which had till then been carried on in English only. For this Hindi needed to have the equivalents of technical terms in English. The need was felt to coin them. Now, what could be the source for the coinage? It was Sanskrit that provided the source. It is only due to the possibility of innovations in Sanskrit that new words could be carved out of the old Sanskrit words, by addition either of a pre-position or two or by addition of post-positions of Kṛt and Taddhita suffixes. Thus Executive Engineer became Adhiśāsī Abhiyantā. The process was carried forward to meanings also. The word *saṁsad* that originally meant an assembly, vide Amara *sabhāsamitisamśadaḥ*²⁴, came to be restricted to a particular type of it, in the present instance the Parliament. Kulapati which had a particular connotation in Sanskrit of a teacher who teaches as per the *Padma-purāṇa* a large number of pupils, is foremost among Munis and occupies himself with *vratas* and *yajñas*:

*ācāryo bahuśiṣyāṇām munīnām agrāṇīs tu yaḥ |
vratayajñādikarmāḍhyaḥ sa vai kulapatiḥ smṛtaḥ* ॥²⁵

or as per the *Arthadyotanikā* commentary on the *Abhijñānaśākuntala* of Raghavabhaṭṭa is a Brahmarṣi who teaches ten thousand Munis by providing them food, etc.

*munīnām daśasāhasraṁ yo'nnadānādipoṣaṇāt |
adhyāpayati viprarṣir asau kulapatiḥ smṛtaḥ* ॥²⁶

came to signify a Vice-Chancellor. Since the Universities, the Viśvavidyālayas also need to have Chancellors and Pro-Vice-Chancellors, the words for them were coined with taking Kulapati as the base word. Chancellor became Kulādhīpati and the Pro-vice-Chancellor Samakulapati. Since the Universities represented a *kula*, a family, that became the basic word for designating other posts. The Registrar is Kulasaciva, his deputy the Upakulasaciva and still his deputy the Sahāyaka kulasaciva.

The Faculty became Saṅkāya and its Dean the Saṅkāyādhyakṣa and so the process went on.

Quite a few times these Sanskrit-based Hindi words were loan translations of the English ones. Thus the Secretariat having the word Secretary in it became Sacivālaya, the office for the Secretaries, though it is a different matter that even our ministers also grace it with their august presence. The word for Secretary being Saciva, his deputies were indicated by the prefixure of *upa* and *avara*, Deputy secretary is Upasaciva, an Under Secretary is Avarasaciva. Similarly, if the Magistrate is Daṇḍanāyaka, the Sub Divisional Magistrate is Upakhaṇḍa Daṇḍanāyaka. The Section is Anubhāga and the Section Officer is Anubhāga Adhikārī. The Steno is Āśulipika and the Stenographer is Āśutaṅkaka. If Court is Nyāyālaya, the Court of Arbitration is Vivācana Nyāyālaya and the Court of Adjudication is Vyavahāra Nyāyālaya. Provisional is Anantima. Provisional Agenda is Anantima Kāryasūcī, the Provisional Assessment is Anantima Nirdhāraṇa and so on. This is how the technical terminology is rendered in Hindi in *A Consolidated Glossary of Technical Terms*, English-Hindi, Central Hindi Directorate, Ministry of Education, New Delhi, 1962.

Sanskrit provided the source for technical terms not only in India but also in many countries beyond its shores. Practically the whole of Southeast Asia owes its technical terminology to Sanskrit. The process started very early has been continued to the present day. A number of Sanskrit scholars, seasoned and learned, are working hard at the Royal Institute, Bangkok even at present in coining technical terms for Thai from Sanskrit source. A large corpus of the technical terminology of Southeast Asia is Sanskritic. On the principle of a boiled grain in a cooking pot indicating whether its entire content is cooked or not, *sthālīpulākanyāya*, a few illustrations thereof are being reproduced here. Let us first of all take up the names of the various sciences and disciplines in Thai: Anthropology, Manusyavidyā; Economics, Sethasāt, Śreṣṭhasāstra; Logic, Takavidyā, Tarkavidyā; Psychology, Citavidyā; Ethics, Caryāsāt, Caryāsāstra; History, Pravattisāt, Pravṛtṭisāstra, Political Science, Rathasāt, Rāstrasāstra, Engineering,

Vissavakammasāt, Viśvakarmaśāstra; Zoology, Sattvavidyā, Science of Medicine, Vaidyasāt, Vaidyaśāstra; Surgery, Sallayasāt, Śalyaśāstra. The Vice-Chancellor is Adhikārapati, Dean Gaṇapati, Faculty Gaṇa, University, Mahāvidyālaya, College, Vidyālaya, Vocational College Vidyālaya Ājīva. The Bachelor's degree is Bandit, Paṇḍita, the Master's Mahābandit, Mahāpaṇḍia, Master of Arts Aksorasāt Mahābandit, Akṣaraśāstra Mahāpaṇḍita, Ph.D. Dussadī Bandit, Tuṣṭipaṇḍita. For research the word is vichay, vicaya, gathering, collecting. Multipurpose building is Sālā Anekaprasaṅg, Śālā Anekaprasaṅga. Anekaprasaṅga for multipurpose is the word in Indonesian also. The word for painting or photography is rūp (a), for bank thanākhān, dhanāgāra, for cheque bāht (dhana) patra, for telephone thorasāp, dūraśabda, for telegram, thoralekh, dūralekha, for post office, Praisanī, for water works prapā, for aeroplane ākādyān, ākāśayāna and so on. In Malaya a school student is siswa, śiṣya, a college or university student is mahāsiswa, mahāśiṣya, scholarship or fellowship is beayaśiswa, vyayaśiṣya, a teacher is guru, a university teacher is mahāguru. Bursary or financial assistance is dharmasiswa, dharmāśiṣya. Librarian is Pustakawān. Earthquake is kampabhūmi. Newspaper is Beritapatra, Vṛttapatra and the headline in it is berita utama, vārtā uttama. In Indonesian the word for zoo is lokasattva; for war commander agrasenāpati; for the epicenter of the atmosphere antarātā; for warehouse bhāṇḍa; for battle saṅghāta; for award or medal for merit satyalāñchana; for magnifying glass sūryakānta; for hospital or law court dharmasālā; for mirror kācamukha; for Naval Admiral Laksamana [Lakṣmaṇa] (also in Malay); for community service lokakārya; for minister or governor nagarawān; for grammar or advanced study paramaśāstra or tatabhāsā; for drawing or painting paṭa; for echo pratiśabda; for troops or army tantra; for law administration tata-ācāra; for female journalist vārtāvatī; for judge or administrator of justice pradātā; for religion āgama; for mausoleum āśrama, Asrama Haji Pir (the name of a mausoleum in Jogjakarta). For dictionary the word in Lao is podcanānukom, vacanānukrama; for public opinion matimahāson, matimahājana; for philanthropic organization, no

profit organization *munniṭhi*, *mūlanidhi*; for grammar book which explains syntax *vākayasampan*, *vākyasambandha*; for periodical, journal, *varasān*, *varasāra*; for battle or things connected with it the words are: *yudthasād*, *yuddhaśāstra*, the science of warfare, the war strategy; *yudthobāy*, *yuddhopāya* and *yudthavidi*, *yuddhavidhi*, battle tactics; *yudthapān*, *yuddhabhāṇḍa*, war materials, *yudthaphūm*, *yuddhabhūmi*, battlefield; for sabotage *vinādkam*, *vināśakarma*; for watchman, *yāmika*; for amnesty, pardon, *nilathodkam*, *nirdoṣakarman*.

The potential for innovation in Sanskrit has not remained confined to any particular period. It is in evidence in the modern period as well. The Sanskrit writers who are writing in the present time have, if they are to keep pace with it, to describe objects, events and situations that did not exist before. Evidently the words for them would not also exist then. They had therefore a great challenge before them. How were they to proceed about creating a new vocabulary that could go well with the genius of Sanskrit? The Sanskrit that had come down to them lacked it. They had perforce to invent it. Since Sanskrit has the infinite potential for innovation, they could create one. For this they proceeded in three ways: First was that they incorporated the foreign words—it was mostly the English words, occasionally it could be Urdu or Persian words as well—by adding the case affixes to them in line with the principle *apadaṁ na prayuñjīta*, one should not use a word which is not *pada* (which it would become when *sup* or *tiṅ* suffixes are added to it). Any word, whether of Indian or foreign origin, could carry the designation of *Prātipadika*, according to the votaries of this school, if it has some meaning, *arthavac chabdasvarūpam*. My father, one of the greatest of the Sanskrit grammarians of his time in his own right, subscribed to this view. It was common to come across the reference to himself in the title pages of his works as *śrīdayānandakāleje saṁskṛtaprādhyaṇakena cārudevaśāstriṇā praṇītam* (*śrīgāndhicaritam*). A great scholar-poet of Pune, the late Prof. G.B. Palsule also subscribed to this view. He would use with no inhibition English words with Sanskrit case affixes, e.g., *bombāspṛṣṭānāni*, *atra plega utpatsyayte*, *Madanalālas taṁ rivālḥvarasya golikānāṁ baḷicakāra*, *koṭam apāmiya nāgadante*

sthāpayati etc. The word *cāya* has very often been used by modern Sanskrit writers with Sanskrit case affixes, *āgaccha, cāyaṁ piba, caṣakāc cāyaṁ pītṛvā* and so on. The second was that they made the foreign words or the non-Sanskritic words used in vernaculars look Sanskrit to avoid in all probability their appearing as odd things out in Sanskrit compositions by Sanskritizing them keeping them as close as possible in sound and in certain cases also in sense to their foreign originals. In this category could be mentioned words like *Tamasā* for the river Thames in England: *Tamasākhyā taraṅgiṇī nagaram abhitaḥ pravahati pramodakāriṇī, svaphena* for *sabun* or *soap*: *sugandhisvaphenena snātavyam, maruttara* for *motor car*: *bhramaṇāya cakṣūṁṣi camatkurvanto maruttarāḥ*. The inclination to make words of non-Sanskrit origin look like Sanskrit prompted a few Sanskrit writers to connect them with Sanskrit by twisting them a bit through a little phonetic change; e.g. *tobha* from *topa*, a long range gun deriving it from *√tubh* *himsāyām, hāla*, English *hall*, from *√hal* *vilekhane halyate=vilikhyate=bhidyate janasamudāyena yugapat iti hālaḥ* (the explanation offered by the author himself), *vāṇijyāra* for *bazaar*, *haramamoyama* for *harmonium*, *apasara* for *officer* and so on. The third was to coin Sanskrit equivalents of words of non-Sanskrit origin keeping them as close as possible in sound and sense to their originals. Incidentally, this comprises the largest corpus of words, e.g., *nālāstra* for *gun*, *paraiddhita* for *parasite*, *jīvanāśvāsana* for *life insurance*, *capalopānah* for *chappal*, *arthapatraka* for *budget*, *dūrasandeśavāhaka* for *telegraph peon*, *karakarpaṭa* or *karavāsas* for *handkerchief*, *naktāmśuka* for *night gown*, *uraśśravayantra* for *stethoscope*, *saghanacikitsākendra* for *I.C.U.*, *bhūtaila* or *prataila* for *petrol* and so on.

The common word for watch is *ghaṭī* or *ghaṭikā*. If English has words for its different types, well, Sanskrit could also have the same: *maṇibandhaghaṭī* for *wrist watch*, *paṭalaghaṭī* for *time piece* and *bhittighaṭī* for *wall clock*.

A modern Sanskrit writer (The Late Shrinivasa Shastri) has given in his Sanskrit composition, the *Sūryaprabhā*, words for all the different types of bomb which he calls *vama* connecting

it fancifully with $\sqrt{\text{vam}}$, *ṭuvama udgiraṇe*, explosive bomb, poisonous bomb, incendiary bomb, time bomb: *visphoṭakā vamā*, *viṣodvāmakā vamāḥ*, *agnivāmāḥ*, *samayāpekṣivāmāḥ*. So has he the words for different types of gases: *narasaṁharaṇā viṣāktā aśrusāriṇaḥ kṣaviṇaḥ todotpādino visarpasampādinaś ca geṣāḥ*, the poisonous gas, the tear gas, the nose-irritant gas, the lung-irritant gas and the blister gas.

Coming to innovation in literature we first turn our attention to drama. The innovative approach is noticeable there in the appearance of short plays, one-act plays, the Ekāṅkins, the Radio plays and the plays for the television. It is the innovative spirit again which has connected foreign plays with Sanskrit. Of late a number of Shakespearean plays like *Othello* and *Merchant of Venice*, the former under the same title and the latter under the title *Venicavaṇija* have got the titles *Dīnārkarājakumāra-hemalekha* and *Candrasena* at the hands of Sukhmoy Bhattachatya and S.D. Joshi respectively. The *Faust* of Goethe has become *Viśvamohana* at the hands of S.N. Tadpatrikar and *The Cup of Tennyson* the *Kamalāvijayanātaka*.

A most significant development in modern Sanskrit drama has been the revival of the Sanskrit stage. There surely must have been one, fairly well-developed at that, at the time of Bharata who gives an elaborate description of it in his *Nāṭyaśāstra* which continued for quite a few centuries as testified by later works on Dramaturgy. In some period of history, however, its continuity got broken with the result that nothing of the traditional stage is available to the present period. When some of the more enterprising ones among the present-day Sanskritists tried to put on boards the old Sanskrit plays or for that matter the new ones, they had nothing to fall back upon by way of stage, except, of course, the description of it in the *Nāṭyaśāstra* and other works on Dramaturgy. They had then two options: To recreate the stage after the description of it in old dramaturgical texts or to build it up anew after their own imagination keeping in view what actually was available to them by way of stage. They had to do so. Their resources being what they were or are, they could not hope to build the theatre halls, the Rāṅgaśālās, described in old texts. Moreover, they had to

take into account the requirements of the present age; the light and sound effect and the technicalities.

As the present-day Sanskritists have to depend upon their imagination for the production of the plays, as said earlier, it is not unoften that their innovative genius comes to the fore for depicting certain situations difficult of presentation on the stage ordinarily. They press into service, to serve their purpose, the modern aids with quite successful results. Thus in the play *Madanadahana* of Ramesh Kher which deals with the theme of the burning of Kāma by Śiva with the fire from his third eye, the arrival of the spring, as suggests the playwright through the stage direction, the *nāṭyanirdeśa*, can be depicted by hanging down the creepers kept at the top in such a way as to be out of the view of the audience. Similarly, suggests he, an artificial eye of cotton could be put in Śiva's forehead and electric wire passed through his matted hair with a bulb concealed in it. At the appropriate moment the light is to be switched and the bulb lighted for a while to give the appearance of the fire coming out of the forehead. Kāma can be made to fall behind an artificial hill placed on the stage. There could be released a lot of smoke of the unguents symbolizing Kāma's burning. In the *Adhyātma* the playwright Krishna Lal suggests the depiction of the scene of the gifting of the cows by Vājaśravasa by putting their shadow on the screen. To give the whole scene a more realistic touch he further suggests that the lowing of the cows could be indicated (possibly from behind the screen) through the playing of a cassette.

Innovation in Sanskrit drama is a continuous process with the Sanskrit playwrights opting for the latest varieties like the street corner performances or what goes by the name of Nukkad plays in vernaculars. And it is not always that it is the professionals who act in them. The amateurs too try their hand at it and very successfully at that. When Mrs. Rama Chaudhary was alive she had in her drama troupe, the *Prācyavāṇī*, even some I.A.S. officers who would act in plays, their Sanskrit pronunciation being fairly upto the mark.

Coming to poetry, innovation first came to be noticed in the use of the Hindi metres like Doha, Soratha, Chaupai, Alha

and so on and the Urdu metres like Bahare Hazaz Mussadas Mahzuf, Bahare Raman Musamman Mahzuf etc. in the works the *Jayapuravaibhavam* and the *Sāhityavaibhavam* of the celebrated Jaipur writer the late Bhatta Mathura Nath Shāstri. Later, other writers employed in their works English poetic forms like Sonnet. Quite a few of the modern Sanskrit writers are modelling their poems on film songs and setting them to their popular tunes. Free verse which was unknown to Sanskrit has found a strong presence in it. The ongoing innovative process has led to appearance in it of the form called non-poetry or *akavitā* in Hindi. Quawwalis and Gazals have also their place in it in the similar-sounding new nomenclature of *Kākalikā* and *Kajjalikā* respectively. The latest innovation in Sanskrit poetry is the introduction of Haiku in it.

Humour, the paucity of which had been bemoaned by many a critic, has found its fulsome place in the writings of a number of modern poets a galaxy of whom is visible now.

In prose the innovative spirit had exerted itself in adding to the Sanskrit literature a whole lot of novels from about the middle of the 19th cen. Since it was absent in Sanskrit in the form in which it is met with in other literatures—Sanskrit had only the *Kathā* and the *Ākhyāyikā* of which *Kādambārī* stealing the light had provided the nomenclature to the new literary form in other languages what goes by the name novel in English literature—a new name *Navalikā* going in sound with the English word Novel has been given to it. As for short story, there is a profusion of it, thousands of such having made their appearance over the past decades. The more noteworthy version of it is mini-story, the *laghukathā*.

Before the present Address is brought to a close, it is worth its while to reproduce an episode which points to the innovative use to which Sanskrit can be put, as indeed it had been put. The late Prof. P.H.L. Eggermont, Sanskrit colleague of the writer of these lines at the Catholic University, Leuven, Belgium had recounted to him an incident in his life. The World War II was on. Prof. Eggermont was apprehended by the Nazis on a false report of being opposed to them and sent to jail where he led for a year and a half a miserable life suffering all kinds of

hardships. He was completely cut off from the outside world with no news whatsoever. No letter would ever reach him. To his surprise one day he got a letter from his friend Prof. Sten Konow of Oslo, Norway. The letter was in Sanskrit. The prison authorities checked it but since they could make nothing of it, they passed it on to him. It is from that letter that he could infer that the Nazis had suffered defeat and that the allies had won. The letter had just the following two sentences: Lord Viṣṇu has got up from his serpent bed. The period of the curse of the Yakṣa is almost over. Prof. Eggermont took the hint. His period of curse was almost drawing to a close and that he may be freed soon, he came to guess. And that could be possible only if the allies could win. So it is through Sanskrit that Prof. Eggermont took the hint of the victory of the allies in his prison cell!

Friends, I have spoken at length. The topic was such that I was carried away by it. But time is not limitless for us ordinary mortals though for immortal poets like Bhavabhūti it is, *kālo hy ayaṁ niravadhiḥ*. It is time now I conclude. I am grateful to you for giving me a patient hearing. For me a visit to Pune is always a great experience. With all its galaxy of scholars, it is a veritable *tīrtha*, *yad adhyāsitaṁ arhadbhis tad dhi tīrthaṁ pracakṣate*. That I could come to this *tīrtha* is my good luck.

References

1. 1.2.5.
2. 3.2.108.
3. 4.1.62.
4. *Rāmāyaṇa*, 5.30.18.
5. *Kāvyaḍarśa*, 1.33.
6. *Rāmāyaṇa*, 3.11.56.
7. 6.1.13.
8. Monier-Williams, M., *Sanskrit-English Dictionary*.
9. *Śabdaratnasamanvayaśāstra*, 225.15; *rumā tu lavaṇākare*, *Viśvalocanaśāstra*, 246.28; *rumā sugrīvādāreṣu viśiṣṭalavaṇākare*, *Vaijayantīśāstra*, 41.10; *Medinīśāstra*, 117.29; *Viśvaprakāśa*, 112.34.
10. Under the section *mā-trika*, p. 118.

- 11-12. I am indebted for this information to Prof. Bansidhar Bhatt of Münster. On *mleccha* he made a reference to an article about its Mesopotamian origin by Asko Parpola. Apte interprets it to mean a barbarian, a non-Aryan, a foreigner in general and reproduces Baudhāyana's description of him:

*gomāṁsakhādako yas tu viruddham bahu bhāṣate |
sarvācāravihīnaś ca mleccha ity abhidhīyate ||*

"He is said to be *mleccha* who eats beef, speaks a lot in confusion and is removed from all good norms of behaviour."

13. Thieme Paul, Über einige persische Wörter in Sanskrit, ZDMG, Wiesbaden, 1937, pp. 142-146.
14. I am indebted for this information to Prof. Bansidhar Bhatt of Münster.
15. 3.1.144.
16. 1.9.
17. This is how Prof. Bansidhar Bhatt explains the word.
18. *akkhalīkrtyā*, *Ṛgveda*; 7.103.3; *akkhalīkrtya*, *Ṛkprātisākhya*, 7.33.
19. 4.1.2.
20. 6.3.109.
21. *Vākyapadiya*, *Brahmakāṇḍa*, 154-155.
22. *Siddhāntakaumudī* under the *sūtra pr̥ṣodarādīni yathopadiṣṭam*, 6.3.109.
23. 1.14.
24. 2.7.15.
25. *Abhijñānaśākuntala*, ed. M.R. Kale, Gopal Narayan & Co., Bombay, 1920, Notes, p. 14.
26. *ibid.*, text portion, p. 14.

New Directions in Oriental Research

The current session of the All India Oriental Conference is drawing to a close. There is a well-known saying in Sanskrit

*yathā kāṣṭham ca kāṣṭham ca sameyātām mahārṇave |
sametya ca vyapeyātām tadvad bhūtasamāgamah ॥¹*

“Just as one beam comes together with another beam in the big ocean and after coming together goes apart, in the same way do the living beings.”

It is only some three days that we have been together converging here from all parts of India. Now has come the time to leave back for our respective destinations. We met old friends here, we the men and women of the same disciplines, the friends whom we long to see. We also made new friends. We exchanged notes with them which put us wise about the various dimensions of the areas of our study, the prime purpose of such get-togethers. We discovered that there is much to learn in every discipline, in every area of study. Much in the way there is explosion of population, there is explosion of knowledge. There will always be room to learn and to improve upon what one has learnt. Even in areas which have attracted the maximum notice of the scholarly community, there still are some, important enough, which have not got the notice that they deserve. Even about a poet like Kālidāsa who has become the subject matter of more than one Bibliography, a thorough and minute study of the vocabulary and style is still a desideratum. Or else how is one to explain as to why the great poet who uses at least six words for fate or destiny, *daiva*, *bhāgya*, *bhāgadheya*, *niyati*, *kṛtānta* and

Valedictory Address at the All India Oriental Conference, 43rd Session, University of Jammu. Chair : Prof. Amitabh Mattoo, Vice-Chancellor of the University. Chief Guest : Hon'ble Gulchain Singh, Minister for Roads & Transport, Govt. of J.&K.

bhavitavyatā uses the two of them, the words *bhāgya* and *bhāgadheya* always in plural : *bhāgyeṣv anutsekini*², *sā nindanī svāni bhāgyāni bala*³, *sarvathā madīyānām bhāgadheyānām viparyayeṇa prabhāvaparakāṣaḥ*⁴, *anyasaṅkrānteṣv asmākaṁ bhāgadheyeṣu yadi punaḥ kupyeyam tato hāsyā bhaveyam*⁵, *īdrśāni tapasvinyā bhāgadheyāni*⁶, *vikārakāle 'pi prakṛtisthām sarvadamanauṣadhiṁ śrutvā na ma āśā 'śid ātmano bhāgadheyeṣu*⁷, *vatsa te bhāgadheyāni prccha*⁸ and why Kaṇva⁹ and Mārīca¹⁰ address Śakuntalā as *vase* and Gautamī¹¹ and Aditī¹² as *jāte* and why the sages Vasiṣṭha¹³ and Varatantu¹⁴ are called *mantrakṛts*, the creators of the *mantras*, which would militate against the well-accepted tradition of the sages being the revealers of them, *ṛṣayo mantradraṣṭāraḥ*. Scholars have to address themselves to these and many other similar points.

It has often been noticed that in Indian Universities work is carried on on the same or the similar topics leading to much avoidable duplication. The gravity of the situation dawned on me when a few years back I received four theses for evaluation from four different Indian Universities within a span of three or four months. The title of one thesis was *Mārkaṇḍeyapurāṇa—A Study*, that of the second was *Mārkaṇḍeyapurāṇa—Eka Adhyayana*, that of the third was *Mārkaṇḍeyapurāṇa—A Critical Evaluation* and that of the fourth was *Mārkaṇḍeyapurāṇa—Eka Samikṣātmaka Adhyayana*. The same topic being studied in four different places! Well, this neither is the fault of the supervisor nor that of the research scholar. They simply did not know that work on this Purāṇa has been done or is being done in other sister institutions. The argument that each one of the research scholars would have approached the topic from a different angle may not hold good. The data being the same, there is bound to be little scope for originality or independence of approach. The situation being what it is, a mechanism is urgently called for for providing the information about the topics on which work has already been done to date. India cannot afford to waste its scarce human and material resources on carrying on the same work over and over again. The Association of Indian Universities or an organization of this type has to assign itself this task. It has to collect and collate the data about M. Phil, Ph.D. and D.Litt. theses from all the Universities and institutions of higher learning and bring

it out in the form of monographs in every discipline to serve as the guide for Research Degree Committees/Boards of Studies as also to put it on the Internet to be readily available for reference.

Reverting to topics, I would like to emphasize the need to be more careful about their selection. They should be such as to admit some original contribution by way of bringing to light new facts or new interpretation of old facts. There is no point in covering the same ground over and over again. The guiding light for the researchers should be the words of Prof. M. Monier-Williams which he had written in a footnote on p. 9 of his *Sanskrit-English Dictionary* : "I believe for an Alpine climber to establish reputation for mountaineering he must ascend some peak, however comparatively insignificant, that has never been ascended before". It is this approach that will lead to improvement in research.

Till a few decades back critical editing of a manuscript was considered more than sufficient for a research degree in India. Apart from providing training to prospective researchers in constituting the text on the basis of different manuscripts after the well-established methods of critical text-editing and critically evaluating it with a detailed introduction going into the authorship and the date of it, it helped in bringing to light many an important work still lying unnoticed in manuscript libraries. This would also provide an opportunity to them to acquaint themselves with different scripts for deciphering the texts written in them thus exposing them to a different type of knowledge. The practice needs to be revived now where it does not exist and where it exists, needs to be pursued more vigorously.

A lot of Indological research has been carried out by German, French, Italian and Dutch scholars in their own languages. In the absence of the knowledge of these languages the Indian researcher has no access to a whole corpus of works pertaining to his discipline or the area of enquiry in them. He may be covering, as indeed he is, the same ground which has already been covered more thoroughly and more systematically by his foreign counterparts. How many of the Indians know that there is a full-length book on one single *sūtra pūrvatrāsiddham* of Pāṇini in Dutch with that *sūtra* as the title¹⁵ or a study on the particle *ca*¹⁶ in Sanskrit which takes us far beyond the known conventional meanings of it recorded in old texts :

samuccayānvācayetaretarayogasamāhārāś cārthāḥ. By quoting Kālidāsa *adhṛṣyaś cābhigamyaś ca*¹⁷ the scholar points to another side of the meaning of the particle where it means contrast, the *ca* in the above excerpt is a contrastive *ca*, says he. So his enquiry goes on. Even at the risk of being subjected to criticism, I am emboldened to put forward the suggestion that researcher in Indology is advised to equip himself with knowledge of German, French, Italian and Dutch for his researches being really meaningful. Non-knowledge of these languages is no excuse for lowering the quality of research. The Mahābhāṣyakāra is very right when he says *nātyantāyājñānam śaraṇam bhavitum arhati*.¹⁸ Why not take note of hundreds of books and articles published in German, French, Italian, Dutch and Spanish languages on Oriental studies? One may well not agree with the conclusions or interpretations of the authors of them but why not take note of them at least? Simply because one does not know their language, one need not ignore them. Indian scholarship needs exposure to this vast reservoir of knowledge.

Friends, I have spoken for long. I would not like to tax your patience further. I would close by wishing you well in your scholarly endeavours. We have to travel a long distance. The sea is far way. In the words of a western poet we all are picking up pebbles on the sea-shore. Let us pick up as many of them as possible and then move on towards the sea, the vast sea stretching before us, the sea of knowledge.

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Sanskrit and Modern Indian Languages : A Search for Commonality

The present day spoken languages of India can be divided into four families on the basis of their structure and vocabulary : Aryan, Dravidian, Austric and Mongoloid. The languages of north, west and eastern India except those of the Adivasi regions of Bihar, Chattisgarh and Orissa and those of the eastern states belong to the Aryan family. The languages beyond the Vindhya, the southern peninsula belong to the Dravidian family. The languages of the Adivasi regions like Bhili, Koli, Mundari belong to the Austric family while the languages of the regions along the Himalayan Terai belong to the Mongoloid one. The languages of the Aryan family are direct descendants of Sanskrit through Prakrits and Apabhramśas. The languages of the Dravidian family have not come down from Sanskrit. Even with this difference the languages of both these families, the Aryan and the Dravidian, have strong presence of Sanskrit, the only dividing line from the point of view of Sanskrit in them being that while in the languages of the Aryan family there is more of Sanskrit in *tadbhava*, derivative, form while in the languages of the Dravidian family like Telugu, Kannada, Tamil and Malayalam, there is more of *tatsama*, the words in their original Sanskrit, form. This difference is quite understandable. The languages of the Aryan family have evolved out of Sanskrit while those of the Dravidian one have adopted Sanskrit words as

Keynote Address at the National Seminar on "Sanskrit and Modern Indian Languages : A Search for Commonality", Sri Sri Sitaramdas Sanskrit Shiksha Samśad, Kolkata; January 31, 2007.
Chair : Prof. Ramaranjan Mukherji, Ex-Vice-Chancellor, Burdwan and Rabindra Bharati Universities and Chancellor, Rashtriya Sanskrit Vidyapeetha, Tirupati

borrowings, both Sanskrit and they being structurally entirely different. Among the Dravidian languages themselves the Sanskritic content varies language by language. While in Malayalam it is overwhelming, it is just strong in Telugu and Kannada, it is weak in Tamil. According to some specialists it is around 70% in Malayalam, 50 to 60% in Telugu and Kannada and 30% in Tamil. These percentages seem to be based on the very general assessment, not backed by any scientific study, of the strong and less strong presence of Sanskrit. Where it is felt that there is more of Sanskrit, the percentage goes up. It noses with the contrary feeling. So far no systematic analysis has been attempted of the total Sanskritic content in the entire vocabulary of any of the south Indian languages. This is a green area which scholars versed in both the languages, Sanskrit and Telugu, Sanskrit and Kannada, Sanskrit and Tamil and Sanskrit and Malayalam need to visit. It is a daunting task worthy of being taken up as a national project underpinning the role of Sanskrit as a corridor to all the languages of India except those of the Adivasis and the upper Himalayan reaches which have continued to remain isolated and immune to outside influence and which have precious little literary activity in them to need larger vocabulary for more sophisticated thought.

The only notable attempt in this connection was that of the late Ratnamayi Devi Dikshit. Under the inspiration of Acharya Kaka Kalelkar she had undertaken a project of preparing a dictionary of the Sanskrit words figuring in major Indian languages in their original Sanskrit meanings or meanings that have strayed away from the original ones like the Sanskrit word *anśūdaka* meaning dew. It is found in Oriya, Gujarati, Telugu, Malayalam and Hindi, in Oriya, Gujarati and Hindi in the same form and in the form *anśūdakamu* in Telugu and *anśūdakam* in Malayalam. In Gujarati and Malayalam it has the same meaning. In Oriya it means either dew or water in contact with the rays of the sun or the water that is in full contact with the sunlight in the daytime and the moonlight in the night. In Telugu it means the water offered (as *arghya*) to the sun. In Hindi it means the water placed under the sun or the moon.

As a pilot project Dr. Ratnamayi Devi Dikshit took up a hundred words which she published in the *Indological Studies*, the journal of the Department of Sanskrit, University of Delhi, in its issue of

Vol. II, No.2. Shortly after their publication she died and with her died the project. It is high time now the project is revived and taken up in all seriousness. The present seminar needs to adopt a resolution to this effect and persuade an organization to take it up with the Ministry of Human Resource Development providing the necessary funds for it.

While speaking of the Sanskritic synonyms in Indian languages it may not be out of point to draw attention to the fact that what are listed as synonyms in Sanskrit lexicons are actually the words in use in different regions. For water the most common word in use in the north is *pānī*, Sanskrit *pānīya* or *jala* on more formal occasions or by more sophisticate classes or in association with sacred rivers like *gaṅgājala*, while it is *nīru*, Sanskrit *nīra* in the south. For milk while it is *dūdh*, Sanskrit *dugdha*, in the north, it is *khirā*, Sanskrit *kṣīra*, in the east. For egg the word in Hindi is *aṇḍā*, Sanskrit *aṇḍa* while it is *ḍima*, Sanskrit *ḍimbha* in Bengali and Oriya (the meaning has undergone change here. The Sanskrit meaning of the word is embryo). *Anna* in Hindi and some other languages means foodgrains, in Oriya it means rice where it is restricted to a particular type of it. It is not unscientific to claim that the synonyms were the words restricted to certain regions or areas only. What the lexicographers did was to pick them up, they being all of them of Sanskrit stock, and list them as synonyms.

Sometimes these synonyms were restricted in their use with certain objects only. In this connection a comment of the *Mahābhāṣyakāra* is very significant: *niyataviṣayāś śabdā drśyante. Tad yathā—samāne rakte varṇe gaur lohita ity ucyate aśvaḥ śoṇa iti, samāne ca kāle varṇe gauḥ kṛṣṇa iti bhavaty aśvo hema iti, samāne ca śukle varṇe gauḥ śveta iti bhavaty aśvaḥ karka iti.*¹ "(In usage) words are found to have their scope restricted. As for example, the red colour being common to both cow and horse the same of cow is denoted by the word *lohita* while that of horse by the word *śoṇa*, similarly, the black colour being common to both, cow and horse, the one of cow is denoted by the word *kṛṣṇa* while that of horse by the word *hema*. In like manner the white colour being common to both, cow and horse, the one of cow is denoted by the word *śveta* and that of horse by the word *karka*. In Punjabi the word *kakkā*, Sanskrit *karka*, white, is found with reference to

hair only, *kakke bāl*, the grey hair. The word *keśa* is found there with reference to flowing male hair only. It has association with sacredness as well. The Tenth Guru had enjoined on every Sikh to keep five k's, *kesa*, *kangha*, *kada*, *kaccha*, *kirpan*, hair, comb, bracelet, shorts and dagger or sword. For the Sikhs the hair on the head is always *keśa* and never *bāl* for it is how the Guru had addressed them.

Sanskrit Dhātupāṭhas list a number of roots in the same meaning, *iti gatyarthāḥ*, *ity adane*, etc. At present some of the vast array of roots are of academic interest only. But a closer scrutiny of some of the languages and the dialects may reveal their actual use and justify the rationale of the compilers of the Dhātupāṭhas in including them. A few instances here will bear it out. Pāṇini Dhātupāṭha has √*vañc* in the sense of movement, *vañcu gatau*. Sanskrit literature does not furnish a use of it. But it is found in the sense of *gati* in the form of *vanj* in western Panjabi and Saraiki, *vanj*, *vanj*, go go. √*Jam* is assigned there the meaning of eating, according to some it is *jimi*, vide *Siddhāntakaumudī*: *jimiṃ kecit paṭhanti*. In this very sense it is found in use in western U.P., Rajasthan, etc. : *jīmanā*, eating. √*Cam* along with three others with minor initial variations is assigned the meaning *adana*, eating, *camu chamu jamu jhamu adane*. Now, *cam* or *camu* generally to be preceded by the preposition *ān*, is restricted by usage in the sense of sipping only. Many of the variations initially or finally in the roots may be traced to the peculiar characteristics of pronunciation specific to certain areas like *s* being pronounced as *h* in Marwar, Sindh and regions beyond that.

During my early days I had lots of travel throughout the length and breadth of India and had varied experiences in the context of Sanskrit. Once I was travelling from Ootacomand, the Anglicized form of Tamil as well as Sanskrit Udakamaṇḍalam to Mettupalayam in a bus. The bus had an unscheduled halt at a wayside place. Noticing that, a few children came along to sell their wares. Among them were two small children, one boy of about 12 and the other, a girl of about 8. They were selling pineapple pieces. I bought some from them but they were too sour. I wanted salt to tone down their sourness. I did not know the Tamil word for salt. A co-passenger told me that it is *uppu*. Looking at the children I said *uppu*. The elder

one asked the younger, probably his sister, *uppu, uppu, śighra, śighra*. Within seconds she brought a packet of salt to me. More than the pineapple pieces what whetted my taste were the words *śighra, śighra*, quick, quick. How pleasant it was to hear Sanskrit *śighra* deep in the interior of Tamilnadu.

Once I was travelling from Kolkata to Puri. As soon as the train reached Bhubaneswar in the morning, a number of urchins with small baskets tucked in their arms barged into compartments shouting *ḍima siddha, ḍima siddha*, eggs boiled, eggs boiled. They were selling boiled eggs. The word *siddha*, pronounced impeccably, particularly struck me and reminded me of Patañjali's *siddha odanaḥ, siddhaḥ sūpaḥ, siddhā yavāgūḥ*² where it means cooked.

Once I was on a visit to Kashmir. I was in a village with a Kashmiri friend. There were lots of flies around. My Kashmiri friend was trying hard to drive them out and was saying *gaccha, gaccha*, go away, go away. I was quite surprised to notice the use of the typical Sanskrit verbal form *as such* in Kashmiri even at present.

After about a month or so of my joining the University at Puri as Vice-Chancellor, I had to preside over the meeting of the Senate which is a bigger body with people from different disciplines and professions some of whom did neither know Sanskrit nor English and could express themselves through their native Oriya only. At the end of the day when I had to sum up the discussion I touched on all points, even the ones that had been made in Oriya much to the surprise and delight of everybody. After the meeting a number of people came to me and said *apan Oriya bujhanti*, "do you follow Oriya?" I said, no, but I do follow the Sanskrit ensconced in it which is the common thread that runs through all major Indian languages and binds them together.

In the context of the impact of Sanskrit on modern Indian languages it may not be out of point to mention that the first grammars of some of these languages like Marathi, Kannada and Telugu were written in Sanskrit. They all closely followed Pāṇini. The author of the Marathi grammar, the *Mahārāṣṭracandradīpikā*, in Sanskrit was Veṅkaṭamādhava, the Kannada grammar, the *Śabdamaṇi-darpaṇa*, was Kesirāja and that of Telugu, the *Āndhraśabdārthacintāmaṇi*, was Ādikavi Nannaya. Bāṇa's *Kādambarī* exercised such a powerful influence on the writers of

these languages that it became synonymous with novel which is called Kādambarī in these languages now.

In the early stages of the development of literature in modern Indian languages the writers being good scholars of Sanskrit themselves set more of Sanskrit words in their writings. That was the case with writers like Jayashankar Prasad, Suryakant Tripathi Nirala, Maithilisharan Gupta, Siyaramsharan Gupta, Ramdhari Singh Dinkar, Chatursen Shastri in Hindi, K.M. Munshi, Umashankar Joshi in Gujarati, Michael Madhusudan Dutta, Ishwarchandra Vidyasagar, Bankim Chandra Chatterji, Rabindranath Tagore, etc. in Bengali, Nannaya, Podana, Pedana and Vishwanath Satyanarayana etc. in Telugu. Their writings were full of Sanskrit, so full that barring a few words here and there they all looked Sanskrit. A few passages from a few of such writers are reproduced here by way of illustration:

From Hindi:

First a few lines from the play *Candragupta* of Jaya Shankar Prasad, the doyen of Hindi literature:

हिमाद्रि तुंगशृंग से
प्रबुद्ध शुद्ध भारती—
स्वयं प्रभा समुज्ज्वला
स्वतन्त्रता पुकारती
अमर्त्य वीरपुत्र हो,
दृढ़प्रतिज्ञ सोच लो,
प्रशस्त पुण्य पथ है—
बढ़े चलो बढ़े चलो॥
असंख्य कीर्ति-रश्मियाँ
विकीर्ण दिव्य दाह सी
सपूत मातृभूमि के—
रुको न शूर साहसी
अराति सैन्य सिन्धु में—
सुवाड़वाग्नि-से जलो,
प्रवीर हो जयी बनो
बढ़े चलो बढ़े चलो।

A few lines now from the well-known poem *Himālaya* of Rāṣṭrakavi Ramdhari Singh Dinkar:

मेरे नगपति मेरे विशाल
साकार दिव्य गौरव विराट
पौरुष के पुंजीभूत ज्वाल
मेरी जननी के हिमकिरीट
मेरे भारत के दिव्यभाल
मेरे नगपति मेरे विशाल

.....
कैसी अखण्ड यह चिरसमाधि?
यतिवर कैसा यह अमर ध्यान?
तू महाशून्य में खोज रहा
किस जटिल समस्या का निदान
उलझन का कैसा विषम ज्वाल
मेरे नगपति मेरे विशाल

A few lines now from the legendary Surya Kant Tripathi Nirala from his poem *Rāma ki Śaktipūjā*:

रवि हुआ अस्त : ज्योति के पथ पर लिखा अमर
रह गया राम-रावण का अपराजेय समर।
आज का तीक्ष्णशरविधूतक्षिप्रकर वेगप्रखर
शतशैलसंवरणशील नीलनभगर्जितस्वर
प्रतिपल परिवर्तित व्यूहभेदकौशलसमूह
राक्षसविरुद्ध प्रत्यूष क्रुद्धकपिविषमहूह
विच्छुरितवह्नि राजीवनयनहतलक्ष्यबाण
लोहितलोचनरावणमदमोचनमहीयान॥

From Bengali:

One of the foremost of the Bengali poets Michael Madhusudan Dutta was of the firm opinion that without words from Sanskrit the Bengali language cannot flourish. Without these it will degenerate into a language of farmers and fishermen. No wonder his poems have a heavy dose of Sanskrit vocabulary as can be seen from an excerpt from one of his poems:

सम्मुखसमरे पडि वीरचूडामणि
 वीरबाहु, चलि यबे गेला यमपुरे
 अकाले हे देवि अमृतभाषिणि
 कोन बीरबरे बरि सेनापतिपदे
 पाठाइला रणे पुनः रक्षःकुलनिधि
 राघबारि कि कौशलै राक्षसभरसा
 इन्द्रजित् मेघनादे अजेयजगते
 ऊर्मिलाबिलासी नाशि इन्द्रनिःशङ्किला॥

The same kind of Sanskritized Bengali is noticeable in the writings of Ishwarchandra Vidyasagara. As an illustration are reproduced a few lines from his *Sītār Banabāsa*:

एइ सेइ जनस्थानमध्यवर्ती प्रस्रवणगिरि। एइ गिरिरशिखरदेश आकाशपथे सतत
 सञ्चरमाण जलधरपटलसंयोगे निबिडनीलिमाय अलंकृत।

The same is the case with Bankim Chandra Chatterji:

निदाघशेषे एकदिन एक अश्वारोही पुरुष विष्णुपुर हइते मान्दारणेर पथे
 एकाकी गमन करिते छिलेन। दिनमणि अस्ताचलगमनोद्योगी देखिया अश्वारोही
 द्रुतवेगे अश्वसञ्चालन करिते लागिलेन।

The tradition continued even with Rabindra Nath Tagore whose following lines would make one think whether one is reading Sanskrit or Bengali:

अयि भुवनमनमोहिनी
 अयि निर्मलसूर्यकरोज्ज्वलधरणी
 जनकजननीजननी
 नीलसिन्धुजल धौतचरणतल
 अनिलविकम्पित श्यामल अञ्चल
 अम्बरचुम्बितभाल हिमाचल
 शुभ्रतुषारकिरीटिनी

From Oriya:

A few lines from the Oriya classic, the *Cilikā* of Radha Nath Ray:

उत्कलकमलाबिलासदीर्घिका
 मरालमालिनी नीलाम्बुचिलिका
 उत्कलर तुहि चारु अलंकार
 उत्कलभुवने शोभर भण्डार॥
 स्वभावे भाबुकमानसउल्लासी
 दिगन्तबिसारि तीर बारि राशि
 प्रसन्नबदनी उज्ज्वल बरणा
 मुखश्री देखन्ति यहिं दिगंगना॥
 नील अंब तीर चित्र अन्तराले
 नासि, नलबन शैल द्वीपमाले।
 दक्षिणेमिशिछितोरगर्भेआसि

From Kannada:

First a few lines from the *Gadāyuddha* of Ranna who together with Pampa and Ponna forms the three gems of Kannada poetry:

रसेयं कालाग्निरुद्रं पोरमडुववोलंतां सरोमध्यदिम्।
 साहसगर्वालङ्कृतं नटने पोरमट्टेल्लदं भीमनेदेण॥
 देसेयं नोडुत्ते मत्तद्भुतनटनिटिलालोलकीलाक्षिवोतद-
 ल्लिमकोपारक्तनेत्रनिभुजगदेयंतूगिदधार्तराष्ट्रम्॥

Now a few lines from another great Kannada poet Kumāra Vyāsa who composed the immortal classic the *Karṇāta-Bhārata-kathā-Maṇjari* :

श्रीवनितेयरसने विमलराजीवपीनपितने जगकतिपावनने
 सनकादिसज्जननिकरदातार
 रावणासुरमथन श्रवणसुधाविनूतन
 कथनकारण कावुदामतजनवमदुगिन
 वीरनारायण

From Telugu:

First a few lines from *Ādikavi Nannaya's Śrīmadāndhramahābhārataṃ*:

आदुष्यन्तडनन्तसत्त्वुडु समस्ताशान्तमातङ्गमर्यादालङ्कृतनैन भूवलयमात्मायत्तमै
युडुगान् आदित्याशुसमीरदुर्गममहोग्रारण्यदेशालिनोनादिक्षत्रचरित्रनेले नजितुडे
बाहुवीर्याम्बुनन्।

A few lines now from another great Telugu poet Potana from his *Mahābhārata*mu:

शारदनीरदेदुधनसारपटीमरालमल्लिकाहारतुषारफेनरजताचलकाशसुधापयोधिसिततामरसामरवाहिनी
शुभाकारतनोप्पु निनु जूडगनेनडु कल्गु भारती?

Some lines from his *Śrīmadāndhramahābhāgavata*:

अन्धेन्दूदयमुल्महाबधिरशङ्खारावमुल्मूकसदग्रन्थाध्यापनमुल्नपुसकवधूकाक्षल
कृतध्नावलीबन्धुत्वबुलु भस्महव्यमुलु लुब्धद्रव्यसंकाशमुल् क्रोडसदगन्धबुलु
हरभक्तिवर्जिततुलरिक्तव्यर्थसंसारमुल्।

A few lines from another great Telugu poet Pedanna from his *Manucaritra*:

आपुरि बायकुडु मकराङ्कशशाङ्कमनोज्ञमूर्ति, भाषापरशेषभोगि,
विविधाध्वरनिर्मलनित्यकर्मदीक्षापरन्नुडुअम्बुरुहगर्भकुलाभरणबु, अनारताध्यापनतत्परुडु,
प्रवराख्युडु, अलेख्यतनूविलासुडै।

From Malayalam:

An excerpt from Ejuttaccana's *Adhyātmārāmāyaṇa*:

चिद्रूपद्वयन् मृत्युञ्जयन् परन् भद्रपदन् भगवान् भवभञ्जनन् रुद्राणियाकिय
देविककुटन् रामभद्र सारं कोटुत्तप्पोक् विद्रुम तुल्यधरियाय गौरियामद्रिसुतयुमानदं
विवशयाय भृत्पादप्रणामं चेतु संपूर्ण भक्तियोदु पुनरेवमख्य चेतु नारायणन्
नछिनायतलोचनन् नारीजनमनोमोहनन् माधवन् नारदसेव्यन् नछिनासनप्रियन् नारकाराति
नछिनशरगुरुनाथन् नरसखन् नाना जगन्मयन् नादविद्यात्मकन् नामसहस्रवान्
नाळीकरम्यवदनन् नरकारि नाळीकबाधववंशसमुद्भवन् श्रीरामदेवन् परन् पुरुषोत्तमन्
कारुण्यवारिधि कामफलप्रदन् राक्षसवंशविनाशनकारणन् साक्षात् मुकुन्दमाननन्दप्रदन्
पुमान्।

आलोकनार्थमहामुनिनारदन् भूलोकमप्योळलङ्करिञ्चीटिनान्। मुग्धशरच्चन्द्रतुल्य
तेजस्सोदुं शुद्धस्फटिकसङ्काशरीरनाय सत्वरमंबरतिङ्कल् निन्तादराल तत्रैव
वेगालवतरञ्चीटिनान्। श्रीरामदेवनुसंभ्रमकैकोण्डुनारदनेकण्टेकुनेदुसादरां।

A stanza from *Śrīmanucarita* of Nambiar:

पुरहरनमलन् मुरारिदेवन्
 पुरमुरशासन सूनुभूतनाथन्।
 धरिणि सुरमहाजनडब्बु मे
 वरमरुळीटुक वाञ्छितानुकूल॥

Of late the writers in vernaculars are distancing themselves from Sanskrit, for one, that they are not as knowledgeable of Sanskrit as their predecessors were and for the other, they are being swayed by the mistaken notion that Sanskrit comes in the way of the natural evolution and growth of vernaculars which for that reason needs to be freed from it. They have started using more of Desi words little realizing that their shortsightedness and parochial approach will deprive the vernaculars, which they so dearly love, of the inexhaustible store of vocabulary that Sanskrit provides. Moreover, it will result in course of time of schism in literature, one part of it in highly Sanskritized diction and the other inching away from it. But try as much as they can, they cannot take the vernacular writing away from Sanskrit. There is a large corpus of words that has passed into common use and is taken to be as much indigenous as the non-sanskrit one. Their writings have to have social matrix and it is society who owns these Sanskrit words as part of its ethos.

Like the perennial Ganges Sanskrit continues to nourish the Indian languages by providing them with vocabulary, idioms, proverbs and themes. It courses through them all meandering its way from the lofty Himalayas to the sea-washed shores of this great multi-lingual, multi-cultural and multi-ethnic country.

References

1. Mahābhāṣya, 1.4.37.
2. ibid., 1.1.1.

Orientalism and its Impact on Sanskrit Studies

The term orientalism which derives itself from the word Orient which means countries to the east of the Mediterranean, especially the countries of Asia. Occident and Orient are relative terms. To the people of the Occident, the Europeans, the people of Asia that includes our own country India, are orientals. They are to their east. It looks incongruous to find Indians calling themselves oriental and using the term to designate all that belongs to them. We have the use of this word in the names of some of our very prestigious institutions like the Govt. Oriental Manuscript Library, Chennai, Oriental Research Institute, Mysore, Oriental Institute, Vadodara, Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute, here in Pune itself. It also figures in the name of the Conference called the All India Oriental Conference. Indology is a better term in place of Orientology.

Orientalism in the theme of the Colloquium may be interpreted to mean the Western System as it came to be introduced in India in the wake of the coming in of the British who had their own world view with which they looked at things they came into contact with.

When two systems meet it is inevitable that they should impact each other. The degree of impact varies with the identity of the systems, whose system it is. If it is that of the conquerors, the subjugators, it would hold its sway over that of the subjugated. The very fact that the people holding on to their system came to be subjugated come to accord in their view less importance to it. They, overawed by the superior might of the subjugators, allow their (the subjugators') system an upper hand. And this is precisely what happened in India during the past two centuries or so.

**Keynote Address at the Colloquium on "South Asian Civilization :
An Overview", Tilak Maharashtra Vidyapeeth, Pune, January 19,
2007.**

CC-0. Prof. Satya Wrat Shastri, New Delhi. Digitized by eGangotri

For thousands of years Sanskrit was pursued in Pathashalas, Gurukulas, Tols and Vidyalayas which were more patronized by private initiative than by the State. The funding for them came from society, the more affluent members of it, who were philanthropically inclined. These institutions that in primary stage were either single teacher units or at higher stage had but a couple of teachers dotted the entire landscape of India. It is through them that the fountain of knowledge flowed and irrigated the minds of countless millions throughout the length and breadth of the vast stretches of this sprawling country.

Sanskrit teaching in them meant primarily the teaching of the old texts, line by line, unravelling their meanings. The teacher who had learnt them from his teacher through hard labour would put in an equal amount of hard labour to interpret these to his pupils who had to follow a rigorous routine. The more proficient one would be in comprehending the text, line by line, the more scholarly would he be taken. That was the *pañktipāṇḍitya*. To achieve it was the desired aim.

In the Vaidika Pathashalas the alumni were expected to commit to memory the whole texts according to prescribed rules even the slightest deviation from them being frowned upon. In the primary stages the basic texts like the *Aṣṭādhyāyī* and the *Amarakoṣa* were assiduously committed to memory. The idea was to exercise full control over vocabulary and the grammatical correctness of speech. A very popular saying in traditional Sanskrit circles was, and still is: *aṣṭādhyāyī jagannmātā 'marakoṣo jagatpitā*, "*Aṣṭādhyāyī* is the mother of the universe and *Amarakoṣa* is the father of the same. If one has cultivated both, one's success in life is assured.

Disquisitions or the *Śāstrārthas* were the norm in those days and the Vidvatsadas-s where they were carried on were the vogue. It may be interesting to note here that till recently in U.P. and Bihar in Brahmin marriages, when the groom's party would arrive at the brides' place, there would be *Śāstrārtha* between the priests of the two parties the result of which was keenly watched by all those present.

With the coming in of the British a new system of schools and colleges came to be introduced where Sanskrit came to be reduced to one of the subjects among many. Obviously the number of texts

to be studied had to suffer reduction, the more abstruse and abstract of them being completely sidelined, that coming to be the sole preserve of the traditional Pandits, a fast diminishing fraternity with the existing traditional Sanskrit institutions also inserting in their curricula modern subjects in keeping with the demands of the age which would not accept a unilinear approach. Though through the introduction of Honours course at the graduate level and specialization at the post-graduate level an effort was made to remedy the situation, it was not enough to lift up the Sanskrit learning to the level of profundity which is the hallmark of traditional one. With schools having no Śāstric learning how much Hons. and Master's courses would have of the Śāstras? Moreover, the approach was different. In the modern system, it was more varied, along with what is *in* the text there was much *about* it, its authorship, its date, impact on it of earlier texts or of it on later ones. This impinged on the time possible of devoting to line by line mastery of the text downgraded as uncritical approach. The modern method of learning *of* and *about* the text appropriated to itself the more exalted position of critical approach.

Here I may like to take a break and recount a personal anecdote that may throw light on the difference in approach in the two systems, western and the traditional Indian. I am a product of the both. My teacher from whom I studied the *Vākyapadīya* was a Professor at the Govt. Sanskrit College, Varanasi. The place of his stay and that of mine were very close to each other. I would accompany him every morning to the College. On the way we would discuss many things. One day I asked him as to what he thought about the authorship of the *Nighaṇṭu* which was the text that the famous Yāska had expounded in his *Nirukta*. I spoke to him about the three different theories in this connection. According to one Dakṣa Prajāpati was its author, according to the other, it was Yāska himself and according to the third it were the early scholars, the Pūrvācāryas. My teacher told me that he has not given any thought to it. He is more concerned with what *is* in the *Nighaṇṭu* rather than what is *about* it. That sums up the attitude of the traditional Pandits about the old texts and that is more eloquent than anything else in highlighting the difference in approach.

Quite a few of the old Sanskrit texts have a large number of known commentaries, the *Bhāgavata-purāṇa* eleven, the *Vālmiki Rāmāyaṇa* six, the *Yogavāsiṣṭha* thirteen (including twelve still in manuscript), the *Kāvyaaprakāśa* fourteen (that are published; reportedly many more) but none of them engages itself with the question of the date and the authorship of these works. There is nothing in the old commentaries about the *Bālakāṇḍa* and the *Uttarākāṇḍa* being later additions to the *Vālmiki Rāmāyaṇa*, a question discussed by scholars, both Indian and western, extensively. The date of the *Yogavāsiṣṭha* still hovers anywhere between 6th cen. A.D. to the first half of the 10th cen. A.D. with each scholar pushing his own set of arguments for or against one view or the other.

Orient has always been a mystery to the Occident. To unravel it, to have a peep into its past and present has been a passion with it. That is why even the Jesuit priests who have been visiting India prior to the coming in of the East India Company or people of other persuasions have been interested in discovering for themselves the ancient wisdom of India. That accounts for their interest in Indian works that were in manuscript at that time. They collected them and brought them along to their countries on getting back. Later they gave them to some institutions therein. That is how big collections of them came to be built up in countries of Europe over the years. Of these manuscripts a good number is in Sanskrit.

With the coming in of the British the process got a fillip. All this resulted in sizeable collections of manuscripts in such institutions as *Bibliothèque Nationale*, Paris, the *India Office Library*, London, the *British Museum*, London, the *Bodlien Library*, Oxford, the *Cambridge University Library*, Cambridge and the libraries of the *Indological Institutes*, the *Seminars für Indologie* of *Göttingen*, *Tübingen* and *Munich*, and the *Staat Bibliothek*, Berlin and so on of Germany.

The British East India Company took up the work of collection of manuscripts in a systematic manner. For each region it appointed manuscript surveyors. The prominent ones for the eastern region that comprised the Bengal Presidency and included Bihar, Bengal, Orissa and Assam were Rajendra Lal Mitra and Har Prasad Shastri. For the western region were Peterson, G. Bühler, Kielhorn and R.G. Bhandarkar, for the southern region were K. Pisharody, T. Ganapati

Sastry and Vasudevan Pillai, for the northern region, particularly for Varanasi, were Arthur Venice, Vindhyeshwari Prasad Dwivedi, Gopinath Kaviraj and so on.

The total number of Sanskrit manuscripts in various collections all through the country is upward of three million.

The eagerness for search for manuscripts led to such initiatives as the expedition to Gobi desert under the leadership of Sir Aurel Stein. The expedition known as the Turfan Expedition led to the discovery of a large number of important manuscripts. Called after Stein, the Stein Collection, they are now with the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, Budapest. The collection was catalogued in eight volumes under the title *Sanskrit Handschriften Ausden Turfan*. A similar initiative led to the expedition to Gilgit and an important find of manuscripts from there called the Gilgit Manuscripts. The first lot of these was discovered by Sir Aurel Stein and the second by Madhusudan Kaul. The second one is now with the National Archives, Srinagar.

Indigenous effort in collection and preservation of manuscripts prior to the contact with the west owes itself in part to the initiative of the local rulers. The Anup Sanskrit Library at Bikaner, the Maharaja's Library called Pothikhana earlier, at Alwar which is now with the Rajasthan Prachya Vidya Pratishthan, Raja Man Singh Pustak Prakash at Jodhpur, the Pothikhana at Jaipur, the T.S.S.M. Library at Tanjore, the Maharaja's Library at Travancore which is now with the Oriental Manuscript Library and Research Department, Kerala University, Kariavattom Campus, Thiruvananthapuram are the contributions of the enlightened rulers of the time. In another part the effort owes itself to certain communities like the Jains who built big collections of Jain manuscripts, called the Bhāṇḍāgāras mainly in Gujarat. During the British times the manuscripts were also preserved in the libraries of the Oriental Colleges and the Oriental Libraries like the Govt. Oriental Manuscript Library, Madras set up at that time.

The need was felt to catalogue all these collections both in India and abroad. Apart from the individual catalogues brought out by the respective institutions comprehensive ones were also undertaken like the *Sanskrit Handschriften in Deutchland*, the Sanskrit Manuscripts of Germany, in twelve volumes, the *Catalogus Catalogorum* of

Aufrecht and the *New Catalogus Catalogorum* initiated by V. Raghavan and currently in progress at the University of Madras, Chennai.

The biggest collection of Sanskrit manuscripts is with the Sarasvati Bhavan Library of the Sampurnanand Sanskrit Vishvavidyalaya, Varanasi. It has one lakh and twenty-five thousand catalogued manuscripts. Besides these there are thirty thousand uncatalogued manuscripts in Oriya script discovered from Orissa which are one part of the find from there, the other part being with the State Museum, Bhubaneswar.

The splurge for search for Sanskrit manuscripts generated by western scholars led to the discovery sometimes of rare finds in India and abroad. The plays that Bāṇa refers to in his *Harṣacarita* with their special characteristics and which are frequently quoted in works on rhetorics and whose author Bhāsa finds a reverential mention from such a celebrity as Kālidāsa in his *Mālavikāgnimitra* were discovered by T. Ganapati Sastri from a chance recovery in the course of his search of manuscripts of a palm-leaf codex in Malayalam which contained ten of the now well-known of thirteen of them as also one, later identified as *Dūtavākya* in a mutilated form. The search continuing, he was able to lay his hands on more manuscripts of them thus completing the full picture of the thirteen plays. Another equally great find was the Paippalāda recension of the *Atharvaveda* by Durgamohan Bhattacharya from Orissa two small tracts from which he published from the Asiatic Society, Kolkata. The full text of it was later brought out by his son Deepak Bhattacharya.

The next step to the procurement and preservation of the manuscripts was their publication. Scholars thought to bring out in print as many of them as possible. With this started a series of publications some of the more prominent of them being the Sacred Books of the East Series (edited by Max Müller), the Kāvya-mālā Sanskrit Series, the Gaekwad Oriental Series, the Trivandrum Sanskrit Series, the Chowkhamba Sanskrit Series with their offshoots of Benaras Sanskrit Series and Kashi Sanskrit Series, the Anandashram Sanskrit Series, the Calcutta Govt. Sanskrit College Series, the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute Series and so on. Some of the works appearing in these series were critically edited,

some were not. Some works like the *Padamañjarī* of Haradatta and the *Śabdakaustubha* of Bhaṭṭojidīkṣita were published serially in the Sanskrit magazines the *Samskṛtacandrikā* and the *Sūnṛtavādīnī* being brought out in the mid-nineteenth century, around 1850 or so from Varanasi.

Critical edition of the text of a work was the greatest contribution of western scholars. Their Indian counterparts assimilated the methodology adopted by them that led to the appearance of such monumental works as the critical editions of the *Mahābhārata* and the *Rāmāyaṇa* by the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute, Pune and the Oriental Institute, Baroda respectively. Along the same lines is being brought out the critical edition of the Purāṇas by the All India Kashiraj Trust, Varanasi.

The other area wherein the western scholarship created its impact was the preparation of dictionaries like the *Wörterbüch* by Roth and Bothlingk, the *Sanskrit-English Dictionary* by M. Monier-Williams, the *Sanskrit-English Dictionary* by Vaman Shivaram Apte and the *Sanskrit Dictionary on Historical Principles* currently in progress at the Deccan College Post-Graduate and Research Institute, Pune which in their character are altogether different from the old Sanskrit lexicons like the *Amarakoṣa* and the later works like the *Śabdakalpadruma* and the *Vācaspatya* as also Concordances, Indices, Encyclopaedias like the multi-volume *Vedic Word Concordance* of the Vishveshvaranand Vedic Research Institute, Hoshiarpur, *A Vedic Concordance* by Maurice Bloomfield, *Concordance of the Principal Upaniṣads and the Bhagavadgītā* by G.A. Jacob, *A Concordance of Sanskrit Dhātupāṭhas* by G.B. Palsule and the Indices like the *Index to the Names of the Mahābhārata* by Sorenson, *Mahābhāratanāmānukramaṇikā* from the Gita Press, Gorakhpur, *Upaniṣadvākyamahākoṣa* from the Gujarati Printing Press, Bombay, *Pāda Index of the Rāmāyaṇa* by Harcharan, *Mahābhāratapratīkasūci*, the *Pāda Index of the Mahābhārata*, forming the last volume of the critical edition of the *Mahābhārata* from Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute, Pune, the *Word Index of the Mahābhārata*, in CD yet, by V. Ramanujan, *Pāda Index of the Sanskrit Kāvya*s by Satya Pal Narang currently in progress, *Encyclopaedia of Vedānta* by Ram Murti Sharma, *Encyclopaedia of Hinduism* in progress at Hrishikesh and so on. In line with the above

is the appearance of the Bibliographies like the two Kālidāsa Bibliographies, one by A.P. Mishra and the other by Satya Pal Narang, the *Rāmāyaṇa* and the *Mahābhārata* Bibliographies from the Sahitya Akademi, New Delhi and the Indices of the verses in the poems, the plays, the tales and fables like the *Pañcatantra* and the *Hitopadeśa* and the *Campūs*. The texts on grammar now have indices of the Sūtras, Vārtikas, Dhātus, Uṇādis and Paribhāṣās and so have the lexicons of words listed in them. The table of contents, the indices and the bibliography form part of almost all the critical works now including the theses for various University degrees which have in them, in addition to a detailed introduction dealing with such problems as the date and the authorship of the work under study, the other works of the author, the impact on him of his predecessors and his impact on his successors and his contribution to his field.

It was not always the altruistic consideration that drove western orientalisists to the study of Sanskrit literature. Some of them, particularly the British ones among them, had a different motive. It is true that being foreign to Indian ethos they sometimes could not do full justice to it. Otherwise they would not have spoken of the Vedas as the 'songs of shepherds' and Śakuntalā of the *Abhijñānaśākuntala* as 'a rustic girl'. Sir William Jones, a judge of the Supreme Court and the founder of the Royal Asiatic Society of Calcutta in 1784 whose Latin translation of the *Śākuntala* first in 1787 and the word to word rendering of the same in English in 1789 had surprised Europe had started learning Sanskrit, as his biographer Lord Teignmouth testifies, to his desire to understand the culture of the land to rule as a perfect ruler true to his own Whig principles, yet in accordance with Indian law. His ambition was, as says his biographer, to translate only the Sanskrit legal treatise, the *Mānavadharmasāstra*. Max Müller's first foray in Sanskrit literature was to have a better appreciation of the culture and traditions of the natives to motivate them to Christianity. It is a different matter that the same scholar on realizing the depth and the profundity of the ancient Indian wisdom became its votary and came out with the collection of his lectures delivered to the I.C.S. probationers about to leave for India to govern under the title: *India What it can Teach Us*

It was due to growing interest in Sanskrit that Chairs for Sanskrit/Oriental Studies were set up in many foreign Universities

either independently or as part of South Asian studies or faculties of religious studies. In addition to providing Sanskrit teaching to students they evolved into important centres of Sanskrit learning where scholars distinguished themselves in study and analysis of Sanskrit classics. The past two hundred years or so have thrown up a long line of such scholars as have turned into legendary figures commanding instant respect and admiration. Some of them have become a byword for scholarship in a particular field like Max Müller in Vedic scholarship, Pargiter in Puranic scholarship, Jacobi in the Ramayanic scholarship, Franklin Edgerton in Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit scholarship, Paul Thieme in Vedic and Sanskrit grammatical scholarship, Alexander Csoma de Körös in Buddhistic and Tibetan scholarship and so on.

In the Charter issued by the British Crown to the East India Company it was enjoined on the Company to look after education of its British subjects. In accordance with that the Company took upon itself to promote Sanskrit, Persian and Arabic education that was in vogue at that time. In pursuance of this aim it set up Sanskrit/Oriental Colleges in various parts of India some of which served later as the nucleus of the Universities that were to come up there. The first such College to be set up was the Govt. Sanskrit College, Varanasi in 1792 followed by the Govt. Sanskrit College and Govt. Madrasa at Calcutta in 1810, the Deccan College, Poona, earlier named Hindoo College in 1821 (it was renamed as Deccan College in 1864) and the Oriental College at Lahore in 1870.¹ Besides these the Company also set up the Asiatic Societies, the Royal Asiatic Society, Calcutta, the Royal Asiatic Society, Bombay and the Royal Asiatic Society, London.

In 1830 the thinking developed that it would be better if the British subjects of India were taken away from their traditional learning and were taught English and other modern subjects. The greatest protagonists of this school were Macaulay² and Raja Rammohun Roy³, both vehemently opposing the continuation of the age-old system of education.

When the western scholars took to Sanskrit they had the clear advantage of having already equipped themselves with knowledge of Greek and Latin. They could, therefore, easily identify similarities between these languages and the ones grown out of them and the

languages that they spoke; English, French, German, Italian, Danish and so on and could relate them to a common source which they first gave the name of Proto-Indo-European. The languages of Europe and those of India having commonalities they first grouped under the umbrella term of 'family' which they first called Indo-Germanic, the term later changed to Indo-European. This was to lead over a period of time to the birth of the science of Comparative Philology. The great German philologist Friedrich Schlegel was the founder of this science. He asserted the common origin of Sanskrit and the principal European languages. The similarities observed in the myths of different nations after study of those of India led to the evolution of the science of Comparative Mythology. With this background when the western scholars approached Sanskrit literature they brought to bear on its interpretation fresh light which not unoften appeared more appealing. An instance here would bear it out. In the mantra *gartārug iva sanaye dhanānām*,⁴ *gartārug* had generally been interpreted by traditional interpreters as 'one going up the *garta*'; *gartam ārohati*. Now, it is a moot point as to how *ārohaṇa*, climbing, is to go with *garta*, which means a pit. It has to be *avarohaṇa*, going down. But the moment *garta* is identified with English cart, the anomaly disappears. With cart it has to be *ārohaṇa*, climbing.

The western scholars and the Indian ones who had the western education used the Sanskrit works in drawing the picture of India and its society in the times when they were written. *India as known to Pāṇini, Harṣacarita—Ek Sāṃskṛtika Adhyayana* (*Harṣacarita—A Cultural Study*), *Patañjalikālīna Bhāratavarṣa* (India in the time of Patañjali) are works which on the basis of the evidence yielded by the respective works draw a picture of India and its society and culture in days of yore, the days when their authors wrote them. This became a norm for many a later study. The initiative for literary and linguistic analysis of old Sanskrit works also owes itself to the western critical system of enquiry.

It was due to impact of western scholarship that historical evolution of Sanskrit literature was taken up as a line of enquiry. This needed the dating of the Sanskrit works requiring as it did massive effort on the part of a galaxy of scholars. There was a wide gap in the dating of the *Rgveda* which hovered anywhere between

2500 to 5000 B.C. Gap of several centuries which not unoften looked arbitrary was inserted between the various forms of the Vedic literature, the Brāhmaṇas, the Āraṇyakas and the Upaniṣads. Controversies raged for decades about the chronology of the works and their authors; whether the *Rāmāyaṇa* preceded the *Mahābhārata* or vice versa or whether Aśvaghoṣa preceded Kālidāsa or vice versa. Even in the works of the same author an order was sought to be discovered, the *Ṛtusamhāra* being taken to be the earliest of the works of Kālidāsa and the *Śākuntala* the last on the basis of the linguistic and stylistic considerations. On the same basis certain portion/s of the same work were treated as later additions as in the case of the *Rāmāyaṇa* whose first and the last Books or in the case of the *Kumārasambhava* whose cantos from IX to XVII are taken to be later additions. Massive efforts were also put in to identify through comparative and critical method the large number of interpolations in old Sanskrit texts.

It was due to the efforts of oriental scholars that histories of Sanskrit literature came to be written like the *A History of Sanskrit Literature* by A.B. Kieth, *A History of Sanskrit Literature* by A.A. Macdonell, *A History of Sanskrit Literature* by Winternitz, *Sanskrit Drama* by A.B. Kieth, *History of Dharmaśāstra* and the *History of Alankāraśāstra* by P.V. Kane followed by a large number of similar attempts by later writers.

With the opening up of India to the world, Sanskrit literature has undergone change, both qualitative and quantitative. With access to western literature new literary forms have come to appear in Sanskrit. Novel in the sense in which it is practised in the west is practised now in Sanskrit literature. A one-act play that was a rarity in days of yore is the vogue now. So are the radio plays and the plays for the television. In poetry free verse is a common enough occurrence. Even Japanese Haiku has made its inroads into it. New style and technique have surfaced in all types of literary forms. In keeping with the demands of the age new vocabulary has come to be coined. There are works now in Sanskrit on subjects like library science, *Pustakālayaparicaryāprasūna* and the economic survey of India, *Bhāratiyaṃ Ārthikaṃ Sarvekṣaṇam*. A new revolution is overtaking Sanskrit literature at present.

Sanskrit has gained much from oriental scholarship. It has given new orientation to it and provided it a new impetus to have a different look. It is no longer restricted to the confines of India. Thanks to the efforts of the unending chain of oriental scholars it has come to occupy its rightful place in world literature of which it can legitimately be proud.

References

1. It was set up by the Punjab University College, Lahore through a resolution adopted on March 15, 1870. The first Principal of the Punjab University College, Lahore was a Hungarian national D.W. Leitner who was Professor of Mohammedan Law at the King's College, London before being appointed as member of the Government Commission. A great scholar of Islamic studies and the author of a number of works including the *History of Islam* and the *Races and Languages of Dardistan*, he was responsible for starting six journals including the *Sanskrit Quarterly Review*. Oriental studies which meant the teaching of Sanskrit, Persian and Arabic had taken off even before the setting up of the Oriental College at Lahore. A society called the Anjuman-e-Punjab had set up elementary schools for oriental learning in 1865 that were closed in 1867. The serious and systematic teaching of the oriental languages began with the setting up of the Oriental College at Lahore in 1870, as said above.
2. "All parties seem to be agreed on one point, that the dialects spoken among the natives of this part of India, contain neither literary nor scientific information, and are, moreover, so poor and rude that, until they are enriched from some other quarter, it will not be easy to translate any valuable work into them. It seems to be admitted on all sides, that the intellectual improvement of those classes of the people who have the means of pursuing higher studies can at present be effected only by means of some language not vernacular among them. What then shall that language be? One half of the Committee maintain that it should be the English.....The claims of our own language is hardly necessary to recapitulate. It stands pre-eminent even among the languages of the West.

I have no knowledge of either Sanscrit or Arabic. But I have done what I could to form a correct estimate of their value. I have read translations of the most celebrated Arabic and Sanscrit works. I have conversed with both here and at home with men distinguished by their proficiency in the eastern tongues. I am quite ready to take the oriental learning at the valuation of the Orientalists themselves. I have never found one among them who could deny *that a single shelf of a good European library was worth the whole native literature of India and Arabia*" (Italics ours).

—Excerpts from Macaulay's Minutes.

3. This can be verified from the excerpts from the letter that the Raja wrote to Lord Amherst, the then Governor-General in Council on 11th December, 1823:

"We now find that the Government are establishing a Sangsrit School under Hindoo Pundit to impart such knowledge as is already current in India. This Seminary (similar in character to those which existed in Europe before the time of Lord Bacon) can only be expected to load the minds of youths with grammatical niceties and metaphysical distinctions of little or no practical use to the possessors or to society. The pupils will there acquire what was known two thousand years ago.....The Sangsrit language so difficult that almost a life time is necessary for its perfect acquisition, is well-known to have been for ages a lamentable check on the diffusion of knowledge; and the learning concealed under this almost impervious veil is far from sufficient to reward the labour of acquiring it.....No improvement can be expected from inducing young men to consume a dozen of years of the most valuable period of their lives in acquiring the niceties of the Byakurun or Sangsrit grammar. For instance in learning to discuss such points as the following: *Khad* signifying to eat, *khaduti*, he or she or it eats. Query, whether does the word *khaduti*, taken as a whole, convey the meaning he, she or it eats, or are separate parts of this meaning conveyed by distinct portions of this word? As if in the English language it were asked, how much meaning is there in the *eat*, how much in the *s*? and if the whole meaning

of the word is conveyed by those two portions of it distinctly, or by them taken together? Neither can much improvement arise from such speculations as the following, which are the themes suggested by the Vedant:—In what manner is the soul absorbed into the deity? What relation does it bear to the divine essence? Nor will youths be fitted to be better members of society by the Vedantic doctrines, which teach them to believe that all visible things have no real existence; that as father, brother, etc., have no actual entity, they consequently deserve no real affection, and therefore the sooner we escape from them and leave the world the better. Again, no essential benefit can be derived by the student of the Meemangsa from knowing that what it is that makes the killer of a goat sinless on pronouncing certain passages of the Veda and what is the real nature and operative influence of the passages of the Veda. Again, the student of Nyaya Shastra cannot be said to have improved his mind after he has learned from it into how many ideal classes the objects in the universe are divided, and what speculative relation the soul bears to the body, the body to the soul, the eyes to the ear, etc.....The Sangsrit system of education would be the best calculated to keep this country in darkness.....but as the improvement of the native population is the object of the Government, it would consequently promote a more liberal and enlightened system of instruction, embracing mathematics, natural philosophy, chemistry and anatomy, with other useful sciencesby employing a few gentlemen of talents and learning educated in Europe, and providing a college furnished with the necessary books, instruments and other apparatus”.

4. *Rgveda*, 1.124.7.

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THE AUTHOR

Born on 29th September, 1930, Professor Satya Vrat Shastri had his early education under his father, Professor Charu Deva Shastri. He received record marks in B.A. Hons. in Sanskrit and a First Class First in M.A. in Sanskrit from the Panjab University, and won University Medals. After doing his Ph.D. at the Banaras Hindu University he joined the University of Delhi, where during the forty years of his teaching career he has

held important positions as the Head of the Department of Sanskrit and the Dean of the Faculty of Arts. He was also Vice-Chancellor of Shri Jagannath Sanskrit University, Puri, Orissa. He has the distinction of having been Visiting Professor in five universities on three continents. He has attended and chaired a number of national and international conferences and seminars and delivered more than a hundred lectures in universities in Europe, North America, Southeast Asia and the Far East.

At Present he is Honorary Professor at the Special Centre for Sanskrit, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi.

Both a creative and a critical writer, Prof. Satya Vrat Shastri has to his credit in creative writing in Sanskrit three Mahākāvya of about a thousand stanzas each, one Prabandhakāvya and three Khaṇḍakāvya, and five works in critical writing including a pioneering one, *The Rāmāyaṇa—A Linguistic Study*.

He is the subject matter of seventeen theses for Ph.D. and D.Litt. degrees in Indian Universities.

He has edited two research journals the *Indological Studies* and the *Śrījagannāthajyotiḥ* of which he was the founder, three felicitation volumes and a dictionary of the Sanskrit Words in Southeast Asian Languages.

He has translated A.A. Macdonell's *A Vedic Grammar for Students* into Hindi, the Sanskrit Mahākāvya, the *Rāmacaritābdhiraṭna*, into English and the select poems of the prominent poets of the world into Sanskrit.

He is working presently on a multi-volume Sanskrit Mahākāvya on the principal cultural currents of the world.

Recipient of fifty-five honours and awards, national and international, including Padma Shri and four Honorary Doctorates, he was described in the Citation for the Honorary Doctorate at the Silpakorn University, Bangkok as a 'living legend in the field of Sanskrit'.



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YASH PUBLICATIONS

X-909, Chand Mahalla

Gandhi Nagar, Delhi-31

ISBN 81-89537-25-3



9 788189 15

Rs. 4